

Peace not yet a watershed for Palestinian agriculture

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Israeli exploitation of water sources in the West Bank coupled with restrictions placed on Palestinian use of water have severely curtailed the options of the Palestinians in developing agriculture, their mainstay vocation, an Amman meeting was told Monday.

Erratic rains have become the main source of water for the Palestinian farming community in a land once known as one of the most fertile in Middle East, Palestinian experts told a seminar entitled "Optimisation of Water in Agriculture."

The experts, representing institutions not affiliated with the Palestine National Authority (PNA) in Gaza and Jericho, presented a very bleak picture of the agricultural situation in the West Bank, more than one year after the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel signed their historic autonomy agreement.

Shawkat Sarsour, an agriculture engineer with the Jerusalem-based Palestine Agricultural Relief Committee (PARC), a non-governmental voluntary agency, briefly outlined the main features of agriculture in the West Bank. But, he explained, most of the figures he cited were estimates since the Palestinians had little means to collect more accurate data under occupation.

Mr. Sarsour said the total area of Palestinian land Israel occupied in the 1967 war, including Jerusalem, was 6,440 square kilometres, and the Jewish state has either

confiscated or declared 53 per cent of this area as closed zones.

The total area of cultivated land in the West Bank is 175,000 hectares (1,750,000 dunums) and in the Gaza Strip 18,000 hectares (180,000 dunums), he said.

Agriculture accounts for about 20 per cent of the Palestinians' gross domestic product (GDP) and employs one fifth of the Palestinian labour force. The bulk of the agricultural land is rainfed, a natural result of the denial or restricted access to water for irrigation purposes.

The overall features of the land, the different climates, the availability of experienced personnel and, above everything, the Palestinians' attachment to their land make it highly possible that in a state of freedom of options and access to water, the Palestinians would be able to develop their farming sector quite well, Mr. Sarsour said.

"The lack of water poses one of the major obstacles for expanding the areas of irrigated land since water monitoring and planning is linked directly to the Israeli occupation authorities," said Mr. Sarsour.

According to Mohammad Al Tourshian, another PARC engineer, Israel is using about 80 per cent of the replenishable water in the West Bank to serve Israeli towns and cities while denying the Palestinians any right to dig new wells and limiting the amount of water that the Palestinians could pump from existing wells.

"Excessive digging by Israel also affects the productivity of springs," another

source of water for the Palestinians, and increases the salinity of water available from the springs, Mr. Sarsour said.

Many of the water wells in the Jordan Valley have been closed by the Israelis citing "security reasons," he said.

Figures made available to the Jordan Times showed that the West Bank holds water resources that could safely yield around 600 million cubic metres of water every year but the 1.2 million Palestinians in the West Bank get about 120 million cubic metres per year. The 120,000 settlers the West Bank consume 65 million cubic metres and Israel pumps the rest to beyond the "green line."

The per capita consumption of water among Israeli Jews is 13 times more than the Palestinians in the West Bank, which meets 25 per cent of the Jewish state's overall water needs.

Seven-fifth per cent of water used in Israel (1,700 million cubic metres per year) is consumed by the agricultural sector (1,275 million cubic metres) while the Palestinian farming community uses 57 per cent (70 million cubic metres) of its total annual water consumption (123 million cubic metres) for agriculture.

Israel uses five per cent for industrial purposes (85 million cubic metres) while the Palestinian use four per cent (five million cubic metres).

Domestic consumption in Israel (340 million cubic metres) accounts for 20 per cent of the Jewish state's annual use while the Palestinians use 39 per cent (48

million cubic metres).

As a result of Israeli curbs, the Palestinians, despite the fertility of their soil, have come to depend on Israel for half of their needs of agricultural production, said Mr. Tourshian.

The Palestinians also depend on Israel for more than 80 per cent of their needs of fertilisers and pesticides used in agriculture, and the increased prices of these items in Israel also raises the cost of agricultural production in the West Bank to relatively higher levels but still cheaper than Israel itself.

Palestinian produce sales to Israeli buyers who pay higher prices result in shortages in the West Bank, said Mr. Tourshian.

In view of the present situation, which will hopefully be addressed in the final status negotiations between the PNA and Israel, the Palestinians have to look for options that include the use of wastewater after treatment, building small dams, shifting agricultural patterns to less water-consuming crops and using modern irrigation methods, Mr. Sarsour said.

No significant studies have been made of the options; nor is any estimate of the costs involved.

The PARC was established in 1982 by a group of Palestinian agricultural engineers who sought to offer what they could to improve the agricultural situation in the West Bank. It maintains offices in many towns in the West Bank and depends on returns from cooperative projects and external aid.



FLEXING MUSCLES: Supporters hail Yasser Arafat during a demonstration in Gaza City on Monday. More

than 15,000 people turned up to cheer Mr. Arafat, firing festive shots in the air (see page one) (AFP photo)

Gazans slip further into poverty

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Poverty has deepened in the Gaza Strip since self-rule began six months ago, creating a powderkeg situation that helps explain Friday's explosion of violence in the territory.

Fifteen people were killed in clashes in Gaza City between the fundamentalist group Hamas, which opposes peace with Israel, and police of the new Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

The hard economic times, says Palestinian economist Samir Abdallah, "can only favour extremists and opponents of the peace process."

One of the main problems is Israel's periodic closure of the territory, as was the case after a suicide bombing attack in downtown Tel Aviv last month killed 23 people.

The sealing of the Strip prevents tens of thousands of Palestinians who work in Israel from reporting for their low-paid jobs. Only 14,000 residents of the strip are now allowed to work in Israel, down from more than 50,000

last year. The Israeli punishment is all the more painful for Gazans because half of the Strip's revenue comes from Palestinians who work in Israel.

"The middle class is becoming the proletariat, and it is essential to fight unemployment, but we are still waiting for investment," said another economist, Salah Abdul Shafi.

Western countries have pledged \$700 million in development aid for this year but have delivered only \$100 million, partly out of concern over the PNA's ability to run the Gaza Strip and Jericho. The two areas became autonomous in May under the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) accord signed in September of last year.

"The lack of money has delayed the start of job-creating development projects and in paying the 9,000 members of the new Palestinian police force, who for three months have received

only a small part of their salary," said Abdallah, a member of a Palestinian economic development commission.

To make things worse, wealthy Palestinians living abroad are wary of investing because of the unstable situation in Gaza.

The United States said the violence Friday was an alarm signal showing the desperate need for the promised aid funds to be disbursed.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak also painted a grim picture. "In Gaza there are no jobs, no infrastructure, no health care. If it continues, no one will be able to convince people to remain calm," he said.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres echoed this view, saying Sunday that economic development through international aid was the only way to fight what he called terrorists.

The health situation has become so precarious that cholera broke out recently, and authorities have reported 45 cases so far.

Palestinian and international relief organisations say they are having an increasingly hard time meeting the demand for assistance. The World Food Programme, a U.N. agency, says that since July it has dealt with 28,000 cases of people in abject poverty, providing them with flour, rice and sugar.

"Poverty no longer touches only the families of workers who cannot make their living in Israel any more, but also farmers," one programme official said.

Hazem Sarraj, an official responsible for distributing aid collected from Muslim charities, estimated that 60,000 Palestinian families were living below the poverty level.

"We are overwhelmed because we can only subsidise 2,000 needy families," he said.

In recent months, the U.N. refugee agency dealing with the Palestinians has added 12,000 families to its list of emergency aid recipients.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Saudis pray for rain after delay

DUBAI (R) — Prayers for rain in an unusually parched Saudi Arabia were held throughout the mostly desert kingdom after sunrise on Monday, the Saudi news agency said. King Fahd urged Saudis last week to pray for rain "due to the delay of rainfall." Winter rains are normally expected by the end of October with the main rainfall usually falling in November. But the port city of Jeddah, which should get two centimetres of rain in November, had yet to see any, residents said.

Iran says drugs gang held slaves

NICOSIA (R) — Iran said its Revolutionary Guards have wiped out two notorious drugs gangs in a major crackdown on traffickers who it said had held hundreds of people as slaves in the remote mountains of southeast Iran. The official news agency IRNA late on Sunday quoted Brigadier-General Qasem Soleymani as saying one of the gang leaders, Jalal Kamrani, had "terrorised the local people, and was holding as slaves 200 men and 300 women." It said Mr. Kamrani's 80-member gang had links with drug smuggling rings in nearby Afghanistan and Pakistan. Another gang led by Eideok Bameri was also annihilated in the operation which restored security in the region, in mountains close to Kerman some 1,000 kilometres southeast of Tehran, the agency said. "So relieved were the people that they held rejoicings for two days on hearing of the annihilation of Kamrani's gang," it quoted Gen. Soleymani as saying. IRNA said weapons seized by the guards during the operation included 140 Kalashnikov assault rifles, 10 machineguns, five rocket-propelled grenades, rocket launchers and other arms.

Velayati in Oman after Yemen

MUSCAT (AP) — Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Mousavi on Monday expressed support for a recent call by Sultan Qaboos for greater cooperation among Gulf states in the interest of regional stability. Talking to reporters at the airport upon arrival in Oman, Mr. Velayati said this was a call that "we welcome and one to which we always give our attention." Mr. Velayati was on the second leg of a tour that began in Yemen on Sunday, when he declared that Iran sought cooperation with its neighbours. He welcomed Iraq's recognition of Kuwait as "a positive step" and said he hoped all problems among Gulf States would be solved through dialogue. He was scheduled to travel to Qatar after Oman. Mr. Velayati was accompanied by a large delegation of Iranian businessmen seeking to promote trade ties and investments among regional states.

Experts study Chepren pyramid for renovation

CAIRO (AFP) — Nine Egyptian and Italian archaeological experts have climbed the 4,500-year-old Chepren Pyramid to inspect damage from a 1992 earthquake and natural decay, an Italian diplomat said Friday.

Seven Italians and two Egyptians scaled the 136-meter high pyramid Friday to survey its four sides and tip, said Giovanni Valenza, technical advisor at the Italian embassy here.

"The idea is to see first hand the situation... for restoration to avoid the collapse of the most unstable stones," Mr. Valenza said, adding that the climb should last about a week.

The sarcophagus of Chepren, who ruled ancient Egypt during the fourth dynasty (2626-2575 B.C.), was discovered in 1818 by Giovanni Battista Belzoni, an Italian amateur explorer.

With a base of 210 metres, the Chepren pyramid is the second largest of the three Giza pyramids, in the suburbs of Cairo. The largest is the great Pyramid of Cheops — Chepren's father — which stands at 137 metres and has a base of 230 metres.

Chepren is the only Giza pyramid to have retained parts of its original limestone casing at its top.

Unlike other ancient Egyptian pyramids, Chepren was built with stones of various sizes and types which has led to deterioration, Mr. Valenza said.

"Some stones are protruding without any support because the lower stones have

been washed away or blown away," he said.

In addition, the 5.4 Richter scale earthquake that rocked Cairo in 1992 damaged the pyramid's tip.

"Some slabs (of limestone) on top rotated when the earthquake struck," Mr. Valenza said, adding that the damage was so obvious it could be seen with binoculars from the foot of the pyramid.

The stones need "a little support underneath them," he said, adding the support should be limestone "like the ancient Egyptians used," and not cement.

The archaeologists will also examine the possibility of constructing a staircase similar to those used by firemen for renovations.

The staircase will include a conveyor belt to transport materials needed for renovation work, Mr. Valenza said.

They will also draw up a "scientific document" of the pyramid's surfaces, which can be used by Egyptian antiquities officials for future restoration projects, Mr. Valenza said.

The full study should take about two months, after which the Egyptian government will get renovation work underway, he said.

The Italian team's work comes as part of a larger project to help in the restoration of two other ancient Egyptian monuments damaged in the earthquake: the Al Ghuri mosque in Cairo's Islamic district, and the Copitic Mo'alaka Church, Mr. Valenza said.

Canada caught up in Somalia scandal

Jeffrey Ulbrich
The Associated Press

TORONTO — Late one sultry evening just outside a bone-dry town in Somalia's western desert, soldiers from Canada's elite Airborne Regiment in Belet Huen, kicked and tortured a 16-year-old civilian captive until he died.

Twenty months and eight courts-martial later, only one soldier, a private, has received significant punishment. Now, a military doctor who was in Belet Huen, Somalia, on the night of March 16, 1993, is alleging a cover-up by senior Canadian military officers.

The charges, the trials, the whole sordid story of what happened during the Airborne Regiment's stint with the U.N. intervention force in Somalia has tarnished the image of the world's premier peacekeeping nation. It also has dampened the morale of many professionals who feel that 40 years of success in peacekeeping, a concept developed by Canada, is being obscured by one incident.

Under mounting pressure, Defence Minister David Collette announced on Thursday that a public inquiry will be held into the conduct of the Canadian forces in Somalia.

"The stories are concentrating on everything from cover-up at the very top right down to individuals on the ground conducting activities that should have been stopped," Mr. Morrison said.

Shidane was captured about 9 p.m. on March 16, 1993, and became a victim of that perception.

He was taken to a bunker called "the pit," where he was tied and blindfolded. Over the next three hours, Master Corporal Clayton Matchee beat him with his fists, a truncheon, and eventually a metal bar. He put a pistol to Shidane's head and used a small cigar to burn his feet.

Pvt. Elvin Kyle Brown participated briefly, striking Shidane in the jaw once and kicking him several times. Pvt. Brown then took photographs of the bloody Shidane and Col. Matchee.

More than a dozen enlisted men stopped at the pit to look. Dozens more, including officers, heard Shidane's screams. Nobody stopped it.

Col. Matchee was arrested March 18. Later that day, he was found hanging in his cell. He was cut down alive, but suffered such brain damage he was found unfit to stand trial.

Pvt. Brown was court-martialed and found guilty of manslaughter and torture. He was dismissed from the army "with disgrace" and sentenced to five years in prison.

Col. Mathieu was acquitted of negligent performance of duty. Maj. Seward was convicted of negligent performance of duty and given a severe reprimand. Sergeant Marc Boland pleaded guilty to negligent performance of duty, was jailed 90 days and demoted to private. All others were acquitted. Capt.

Michael Sox, who passed along the "abuse" order, is awaiting trial.

Maj. Barry Armstrong, a military surgeon, claimed last week that senior officers issued orders to destroy evidence about violence against civilians, including Shidane's death. He did not name the officers but said military police were aware of the orders. He said he refused to obey them and has evidence locked in a safe.

Maj. Armstrong also claimed that a Somali infiltrator killed on March 4, 1993, was shot in the back of the head, "execution style." Nobody was charged in that death.

Prime Minister Jean Chretien's Liberals, then in opposition, accused the Conservatives of a cover-up, saying they were trying to protect Defence Minister Kim Campbell, who then was seeking leadership of the Conservative Party.

Shidane's death was not officially announced for two weeks and then only after it was reported by the news media.

Speculation that the Airborne was a rogue unit gone wild has largely been dismissed.

Still, said Mr. Morrison, a former army colonel, "it's a very highly disciplined unit with a high sense of esprit de corps. Leaders are every vigilant that this sense of unit pride doesn't boil over. But in this case it did."

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:00 Alice Au Pays Des Merveilles
17:30 Un Pour Tous
18:00 Embarkement Port
18:30 Le Vent Des Moissons
19:00 News in French
19:45 Variétés
20:30 F.B.I. The Untold Stories
21:10 Quantum Leap
21:40 Cracking The Code
22:00 News in English
22:30 The House of Eliott
23:10 Fly By Night

PRAYER TIMES

04:44 Fajr
06:04 (Sunnat) Duha
11:21 Dhuhr
16:14 Asr
16:38 Maghrib
17:59 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swedish, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 627818
St. Joseph Church, Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De La Salle Church Tel. 661757
Roman Catholic Church Tel. 623666
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543.

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Armenian International Church Tel. 625226

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684195

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

A cold air mass will cross the Kingdom today, thus temperatures will drop steadily with skies becoming cloudy. Rain is expected to fall with winds southeasterly active. In Aqaba, skies will be partly cloudy with a chance of showers. Winds will be southerly active and seas choppy.

Min./Max. temp. 8/15

Amman/Aqaba 16/24

Deserts 7/18

Jordan Valley 14/22

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 16, Aqaba 26. Humidity readings: Amman 46 per cent, Aqaba 30 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Yousef Sammour 615648
Dr. Khalid Klob 816713
Dr. Issam Asmar 890504
Dr. Riza Abu Zinah 894295
Fires pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Aqsa pharmacy 637055
Nafrook pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 649495
Shmeisani pharmacy 637680
Nairouth pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632
JERUSALEM:
Dr. Ahmad Qanu (—)
Alquds pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Mahab Hijawi 981217
Khalifeh pharmacy 965417

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate 630341

Rescue 192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade 617101

Blood Bank 75121

Highway Police 643402

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Department 630321

Hotel Complaints 605800

Price Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage 897467

Complaints 787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone 661101

Repairs 623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television 771111

Radio Jordan 774121

Water Authority 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company 636381

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 815813/32

Khalidi Maternity, J. Ann 644281/6

Aklich Maternity, J. Ann. 642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Mathies, J. Amman 636140

Palestine Shmeisani 664171/4

Shmeisani Hospital 669131

University Hospital 845845

Al-Muasher Hospital 667279

The Islamic Abdali 666127/77

Al-Abil, Abdali 664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3

Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 771112/5

Army, Marja 891611/15

Quart Alia Hospital 686100

Amal Hospital 674155

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)883323

Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560

Ibn Sina Hospital (09)887332

Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)909090

Princess Basma Hospital (02)755555

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)532005, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

04:00 Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)

07:30 Damascus (RJ)

07:40 Dhahran (RJ)

09:15 Aqaba (RJ)



His Majesty King Hussein Monday visits the headquarters of Royal Jordanian (RJ) and meets with RJ chairman of the Board Basal Jardaneh (right) and the carrier's President and Chief Executive Officer, Nader Dahabi left. The meeting was attended by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali.

King visits RJ headquarters; reviews new air transport era

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Monday visited the national air carrier, Royal Jordanian (RJ), and met with its chairman of the Board Basal Jardaneh and its President and Chief Executive Officer, Nader Dahabi. The meeting was attended by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali.

The King, who was accompanied by the visit by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, voiced his confidence in and support for the administration and personnel of the carrier.

RJ Chairman of the Board of Directors Basal Jardaneh welcomed the King at the outset of the meeting and outlined the preparedness of RJ for the coming stage, stressing its role in supporting the national economy.

The King stressed the need for RJ to deal flexibly with the expected challenges and to swiftly interact with developments to increase its share in the air transport and tourism markets.

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Her Majesty Queen Noor Monday chats with children at a school she opened for kindergarten and first grade youngsters with cerebral palsy (Petra photo).

Queen participates in working session of early childhood education meeting

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Monday participated in a working session of the Conference on Early Childhood Education, entitled "Toward an Educational Philosophy for Preschool Children in Jordan," according to a Royal Court spokesman.

The conference was held under the patronage of the Queen and was organized by the National Association for the Education of the Child.

Queen Noor is the honorary president of the association, which was established in 1986 under the umbrella of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) with the aim of improving childhood programmes and services.

Later, said the spokesman, the Queen opened a school for young children with cerebral palsy, a physical disorder characterised by impaired motor skills.

The school, which currently consists of a kindergarten and first grade, was established by the Cerebral Palsy Foundation in order to promote the integration of youngsters with the disorder into the mainstream educational system. The foundation plans to expand the school in the future by adding facilities for second graders; the spokesman said.

Commenting on the desirability of realising the potential of these children, Queen Noor said that she is "proud and impressed by the foundation's continuing contribution to the education of cerebral palsy students," according to the Royal Court.

She also stressed how important it is that the work of this new facility be seen by public and private school teachers, "as it is a clear example of the unlimited potential these students have," the spokesman said.

Her Majesty was received by the foundation's president, Fakhry Bilbeisi and the board members of the Cerebral Palsy Foundation.

Fateh flexes muscles in Gaza

(Continued from page 1)

Fateh zealots will chop off the heads of conspirators' and accused Al Zahar of accepting money from Iran, a charge Mr. Arafat echoed at the rally.

Israeli Arab mediators attempted to find a formula to prevent future violence that included compensation to the families of the dead and wounded.

The PNA said the agreement was incomplete. Hamas leaders did not sign an agreement because they want Mr. Arafat to publicly accept responsibility for the bloodshed until an investigation determines blame.

"He is still refusing to be held responsible for the Friday incident. So no real agreement between us and the PLO has been made," Mr. Zahar told the AP.

He said it was a provocation to allow armed men to fire at random at the rally when such gunfire was at the root of the problem. "What we witnessed today is an escalation against us," he said.

Israeli communist party leader Mohammad Barak, leading mediation efforts, said Mr. Arafat and representatives of the main militant groups — Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine — had agreed to work together to avoid further bloodshed.

Mr. Barak said the deal did not provide for the disarming of the fundamentalists or an end to anti-Israeli attacks from within the Gaza Strip or from the West Bank town of Jericho, which is also under Palestinian control.

Mr. Arafat charged that the fundamentalists who clashed with his policemen had planned the confrontation and received their orders from abroad.

The main Palestinian human rights group, Al Haq, charged that the police had opened fire indiscriminately and urged Mr. Arafat's self-reliance to ban the "use of lethal force" in demonstrations.

Mr. Arafat, who named a five-man judicial committee to investigate Friday's violence, did not refer by name to the fundamentalists, but said "some people want the march (of peace) to stop."

He vowed that only Fateh would carry on the "Palestinian people's struggle" for a state with Arab East Jerusalem as its capital. "The way is long and hard, but we will be victorious."

Meanwhile, the authority released 10 Islamic Jihad members who had been held for 10 days, bringing to 40 the number freed from the 150 rounded up after a suicide bombing which killed three Israeli soldiers on Nov. 11.

The PNA on Sunday also freed 31 of 50 Hamas militants.

In Cairo, a senior Palestine Liberation Organisation official has blamed the Israeli intelligence service Mossad for the Gaza clashes.

"I can guarantee that elements of Mossad stirred up the clashes," Farouq Kadoumi said in the Egyptian weekly Al Arabi published Monday.

"The Palestinian people will not allow anybody to drag them into a civil war," pledged the PLO's political department chief.

Government to start planning diversional dam to collect Yarmouk River water — minister

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government will soon begin plans for the construction of a small diversional dam to collect water from the Yarmouk River flowing towards Jordan and Israel as stipulated in the Jordanian-Israel peace treaty, according to Water and Irrigation Minister Saleh Irshaidat Monday.

The minister said in a statement to the press that the project aims at enabling Jordan to acquire its lawful share of the Yarmouk River water as agreed to with Israel, expressing hope that the project would be completed by the Middle of 1995 to make available 25 million cubic metres of additional water annually.

Under Annex II of the peace treaty signed last month, Jordan will get 12 million cubic metres (MCM) from the Yarmouk River during the summer from May 15 until Oct. 15 and 13 MCM during the winter from Oct. 16 until May 14.

Dr. Irshaidat said that the Ministry of Water and Irrigation was starting to work on design plans, and tender documents and is also starting efforts to ensure funds to finance the project through the Ministry of Planning.

Upon execution of the project, Dr. Irshaidat said the ministry would then work to improve and mend the King Abdullah Canal and install a pipeline to draw water from Lake Tiberias.

He explained that under the treaty provisions, Jordan is to get 20 MCM more water from the lake during the summer.

Following that, he added, Jordan would begin on studies for the other dams included in the peace treaty. These will be constructed on the Jordan River at the point of confluence between the Yarmouk and Jordan rivers.

Meanwhile, Water Authority of Jordan (WAJ) Secretary General Qusayy Qteishat said in a statement Monday that the NAT was proceeding with plans for the replacement of the old water networks in different areas of Jordan at an estimated cost of JD 200 million.

Mr. Qteishat said that so far WAJ has replaced the old networks of Irbid and Zarqa and is working on those in Ramtha. He said the water network in Mafraq would be the near target.

Experts take up urgency of water conservation

AMMAN (Petra) — In a related topic, Dr. Irshaidat also Monday called for increased international aid to Jordan to help it overcome its water problems under the new era of peace.

Jordan's water resources are meagre and limited, and a great deal of the available water is lost because of several reasons, primarily misuse, thus seriously impacting on the Kingdom's sustainable development programmes, said the minister in an address at the opening session of a regional conference on water conservation in farming.

Pointing out that the average use of water for irrigation in third world countries stands at around 70 per cent, Dr. Irshaidat said that in Jordan 75 per cent of available water resources is being utilised for this purpose as the country depends heavily on agriculture.

As an example he cited water consumption in Jordan in 1993 as totalling 983 MCM. He said this amount was consumed for various purposes, and 736 MCM of the total went into farming.

Jordan is in need of help not only to ensure fresh water resources, but also to implement methods to improve water use in irrigation and to adopt agricultural patterns which economise on water use and result in very high economic yields, said the minister.

French Ambassador to Jordan Bernard Bajolet addressed the opening session underlining the importance of the seminar and the topics on its agenda.

That France and the European Union (EU) are participating in the conference reflects the importance they attach to discussions on water issues and on the exchange of expertise in farming, said the ambassador.

Secretary General of the Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) Hashem Shboul underlined that Jordan was expected to face growing demands on water in the future in light of the country's expansion in development projects.

According to Mohammad Shatanawi, head of the University of Jordan's Centre on Water Studies and Research, the need to replace the country's outdated and damaged water networks was urgent and the completion of this task would save water for the growing demands of the increasing populations.

Organised by the Ministry of Water and Irrigation in cooperation with the University of Jordan and the European Union (EU), the meeting discusses water and irrigation policies in the Arab World, water plans and uses in Jordan, management of water resources, drip irrigation techniques, waste water recycling and other relevant issues.

Six Arab and seven foreign countries including some in the European Union as well as several international organisations are taking part in the meeting.

Jordan, Egypt agree to lay joint underwater power cable

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan and Egypt Monday signed an agreement in Cairo to lay an underwater cable linking the two countries as part of an overall project of linking the two countries' power grids.

Egyptian Minister of Electricity and Energy Maher Abaza said the 13-kilometre cable will be set by a Norwegian company at a depth of 850 metres under the Aqaba Gulf.

The 400-kilovolt cable will be laid in cooperation with Jordanian and Egyptian firms which sub-contract with the Norwegian company, according to Mr. Abaza.

He said the power linkage project is aimed at helping the two countries meet any electric energy shortages.

The deal was signed by Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA) Director General Mohammad Arafah and Mohammad Abdullah, head of the Egyptian Electricity Corporation.

The project is funded by the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD).

AFESD President Abdul Latif Al Hamad said the 240 million Egyptian pounds (JD 48 million) project is significant since it links Asia with Africa and paves the way for linkages with other countries in the two continents.

The Norwegian company's contract is worth \$70 million and a \$1.5 million contract has been awarded to a Turkish firm to carry out civil works and towers connected to the project, according to Mr. Arafah.

He told the Jordan Times in an interview last August, that Jordan was working on expanding its linkage with the network of Syria which in turn is being connected with that of Turkey as part of a five-country agreement signed early this year grouping Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Turkey.

Rawabdeh discusses educational cooperation with Qatari crown prince

DOHA (Petra) — Minister of Education Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh Monday met here with Qatari Crown Prince Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani and reviewed Jordanian-Qatari relations with particular focus on education.

Mr. Rawabdeh, who arrived in Doha Sunday on an official visit for talks on promoting educational cooperation, reviewed with Sheikh Hamad, who is also minister of defence, an existing programme of cooperation in educational fields.

The meeting was in the presence of Qatari Minister of Education Abdul Aziz Turki and Jordan's ambassador to Qatar, Trad Al Fayez.

Earlier Mr. Rawabdeh held talks with Mr. Turki and his senior assistants and said in a statement that brotherly ties are being strengthened through education, the secondment of Jordanian teachers and other exchanges which, he said, lie at the foundation of uniting the Arab World.

Mr. Turki lauded Jordanian-Qatari relations, stressing Doha's determination to enhance cooperation in educational and cultural fields.

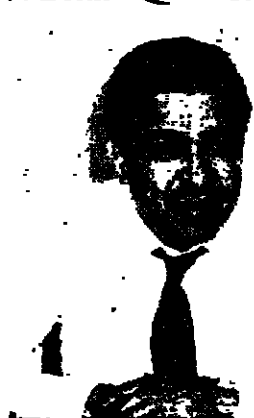
He said Jordan and Qatar had signed a cultural agreement in 1972 which was updated in 1979, in 1982 and 1987; and these were implemented through executive programmes which continue to run until 1996.

Furthermore, bilateral agreements between Qatar's university and Yarmouk University and the University of Jordan aim at bolstering cultural ties, added Mr. Turki.

The talks covered the implementation of educational protocols that cover cooperation in educational, scientific and cultural fields.

Seconding Jordanian teachers to Qatar, cooperation in curricula and examinations and the training of teachers, the exchange of scholarships and visits by educational supervisors as well as books and publications were on the agenda.

Mr. Rawabdeh also Monday visited Qatar University, meeting with its president and other officials to learn about programmes and the work of its research centre.



Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Prince Abdullah opens Jordan week in Casablanca

CASABLANCA (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein Monday opened Jordanian Week in Casablanca, an event which is organised by the Jordanian Exports Development and Trade Centres Corporation (JEDTC) in cooperation with the Moroccan Ministry of Traditional Industries, Foreign Trade and Tourism.

The activities of the opening ceremony included performances by the Royal Jordanian (RJ) Folklore Troupe and the Jordanian Armed Forces Band. The week, held on the sidelines of the Jordanian Industries Fair, includes exhibitions by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and RJ which aim to promote tourism in Jordan. The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs also has a special pavilion at the fair displaying all the stages of the third Jordanian reconstruction of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. Their Royal Highnesses Prince Abdullah, Princess Rania and Princess Aisha and her husband Zeid Jum'a arrived in Casablanca Sunday and were received by Prince Rashid and Princess Hama.

PSD chief to head for Haiti

AMMAN (Petra) — Director of the Public Security Department (PSD) Lieutenant General Abdul Rahman Al Udwan Tuesday will leave for Haiti on a five-day visit to inspect the Jordanian peacekeeping force deployed there. Lt. Gen. Udwan will be accompanied on the visit by Director of the PSD Operations Brigadier Salman Al Ma'aitah and Director of Public Relations and Moral Guidance Colonel Mahmoud Obeidat.

Jordan, Vietnam conclude aviation accord

AMMAN (Petra) — A Jordanian civil aviation delegation Monday returned home from Hanoi, Vietnam, after finalising an agreement, which was initiated by the two sides last December, defines the number of flights the Jordanian and the Vietnamese airlines would be operating between the two countries. The national air carrier, Royal Jordanian (RJ) is expected to operate regular flights to and from Vietnam soon. Director General of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) Ahmad Jweiber, who headed the delegation, commended, in an address delivered at the signing ceremony, Vietnam's openness to the world and development witnessed in the Southeast Asian country.

IAF urges France to lift ban on scarf

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Islamic Action Front (IAF) bloc in Parliament on Monday called on the French government to lift what it said were restrictions imposed on the religious freedoms of Muslims living in France.

The call came amid the reaffirmations by a French minister of a ban on Muslim girls wearing headscarves in French government schools.

The IAF made its appeal to the French government during a meeting that a delegation representing the 16-strong IAF bloc in the Lower House of Parliament had with the French ambassador to Jordan, Bernard Bajolet, an IAF statement said.

The statement quoted the delegation as telling Ambassador Bajolet that "we are surprised that France, which is proud of its revolution and culture, is restricting basic human freedoms ... including the freedom to exercise religious rights."

"Restraining our brothers and sisters in France from exercising their religious freedoms, including the freedom to choose their dress ... will not help contribute to developing the traditionally good relations between your republic and Arab and Muslim countries," the statement quoted the delegation as telling the ambassador.

"Education is a right of every individual regardless of dress," it quoted deputies Hamzeh Mansour and Mohammad Owaidah as saying during the meeting. It was a reference to the expulsion of Muslim girls from French government schools for defying the ban on headscarves.

A spokesman for the French embassy confirmed the meeting and said the deputies delivered to Mr. Bajolet a letter addressed to President Francois Mitterrand.

The spokesman quoted Mr. Bajolet as telling the IAF deputies that France respected the freedom to exercise religious practices and hoped that the rest of the world would extend such respect in the same way.

The IAF was the latest Islamist group to protest the French ban on the Islamic headscarf, which also came amid a French government crackdown on military groups, including Algerian Muslim fundamentalist groups.

Iranian women have staged several demonstrations in front of the French embassy in Tehran denouncing the ban on headscarves, and Iranian religious leaders have issued implicit warning that French-Iranian relations stood to deteriorate further if the Paris government insisted on its stand.

On Sunday, French Education Minister Francois Bayrou defended the ban on Muslim girls wearing headscarves in state-run schools, saying the government had to stop the growth of Islamic fundamentalism in France.

About 30 girls have been expelled from schools for refusing to abide by the ban on headscarves. The ban is seen by Muslim groups as a denial of their right to wear their traditional Islamic dress.

Mr. Bayrou banned the headscarves in September, describing them as "ostentatious religious symbols."

"When you are in government ... you try to look into the future to see what the weeds are, those whose growth will threaten French society and a certain vision of men and women in the next century," Mr. Bayrou was quoted as saying in a television interview on Sunday.

"When you see them ... you have a choice only between two things: between acting and doing nothing," Reuters quoted the minister as saying.

According to Mr. Bayrou, the number of girls wearing headscarves in school had plunged to about 600 from 2,000 in September.

WHAT'S GOING ON

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| <p>FILM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Film entitled "Nachstasyl" at Goethe-Institut at 7:00 p.m. ★ Film in French entitled "Spectre of Freedom" at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation at 6:30 p.m. <p>NEWS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ ABC News Highlights and McNeil-Lehrer News Hour at the American Center at 5:00 p.m. <p>LECTURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Lecture in Arabic on the crucial role of | <p>Arab education by Dr. Majid Din Kheiri at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation at 6:00 p.m.</p> <p>EXHIBITIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Paintings exhibition by Syrian artist Ghayay Al Akhras at Baladna Art Gallery. ★ Ceramics exhibition by Maher Samarrat at Alfa Art Gallery. ★ Ceramics exhibition by Najwa Annab at the Orfali Art Gallery. ★ Ceramics exhibition by Sa'ad Al Ani at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art. Also showing a paintings exhibition by Husni | <p>Abu Karim.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Exhibition on human international law entitled "Drawings from Arab Calligraphy" at the Royal Cultural Centre. Also showing an exhibition of wooden products by Atallah Zabaneh. ★ Exhibition of paintings by Daniel Argimon at the Instituto Cervantes (the Spanish Cultural Centre). ★ Exhibit entitled "Signs and Symbols: Communication and Interpretation from the Brandywine Workshop" at the American Center. ★ Ceramics exhibition by Mahmoud Taha at Darat Al Fann. |
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Ruling party election throws Nepal into turmoil

KATHMANDU (R) — Nepal's ruling Congress Party staged a late comeback Monday in general elections, cutting heavily into the Communists' lead and throwing the Himalayan kingdom into political confusion.

"It is not a stable situation and it is unclear and uncertain," said Lok Raj Baral, political science professor at Tribhuvan University in the capital Kathmandu.

Congress, which had lagged behind the Communist Party by as many as two dozen seats in early returns from last Tuesday's parliamentary polls, dramatically narrowed their rivals' lead to six, with six races yet to be decided.

With results reported in 199 constituencies, the Communist Unified Marxist-Leninist (UML) had 86 seats to Congress's 90.

The Communists still looked likely to win a razor-thin plurality but it was unclear if they would find a coalition partner to give them a working majority of at least 103.

The Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) emerged as a political wild card, winning 20 seats — 16 more than it held in the outgoing parliament.

RPP's leaders governed the kingdom for three decades under a partyless system which crumbled in 1990 following pro-democracy demonstrations led by Congress and the Communists.

In the last elections in 1991, won by Congress, the RPP was on the political fringe, but it now enjoys a stronger bargaining position. "We will cooperate with anybody with which our policies are compatible," RPP spokesman Kamal Thapa said. "I don't rule out the possibility of us supporting the Congress or the UML depending on the policies they adopt."

Congress had conceded defeat to the Communists several days ago, saying they would sit in opposition.

But Congress President Krishna Prasad Bhattarai said Monday his party could now catch up to the UML, giving the outgoing rulers the chance to form a coalition government.

"We will explore all possibilities," he said. "We will not leave any option."

UML accused Congress of rigging the final races to cut the Communists' lead, and said Congress had no moral

right to form a government because the UML had the most seats.

"A tense political situation may emerge if the Nepali Congress by hook or by crook want to form the government," UML General Secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal said.

"In that case it will not be a stable government because a government which is formed by means of open rigging and blatant violation of all norms of election and democracy cannot sustain and cannot command the respect of the masses."

In the event of a hung parliament, Nepal's four-year-old constitution requires King Birendra to name a prime minister able to form a workable coalition government.

If no lawmaker can command a majority, then the king must choose the leader of the party with the most seats. If a coalition fails to win a vote of confidence within 30 days, fresh polls must be called within six months.

The UML has explored coalition possibilities with Congress dissidents who triggered the snap poll by abandoning Prime Minister Girija

Prasad Koirala in a confidence vote in July.

But it was unclear if the dissidents wanted to break away from Mr. Koirala or if under parliamentary rules they could do so.

The UML's Nepal said he met the head of the Nepal Workers' and Peasants' Party, with four seats, and the splinter Communist group "assured critical and conditional support."

Mr. Baral said the shape of any coalition would depend on moves by Congress and the RPP in coming days.

"The elections which were held by the prime minister seeking a mandate for stability have come otherwise, leading to every possibility of political instability," Mr. Baral said.

The Nepalese prime minister Monday tendered his resignation to King Birendra at the royal palace following the humiliating defeat of his party, a source close to the premier said.

Mr. Koirala was elected to the lower house of parliament on Nov. 15 and said he would not lead the new government if his Nepali Congress (NC) party could not muster a majority to form a government.



Chinese President Jiang Zemin (left) lays a wreath at the mausoleum of Ho Chi Minh, the founder of Communist Vietnam, in Hanoi, Mr. Jiang, who is also Chinese Communist Party secretary general, is on a four-day official visit in Vietnam (AFP photo)

Jiang sidesteps Spratlys in Vietnam visit

HANOI (AFP) — Chinese President Jiang Zemin sidestepped troubling tensions between China and Vietnam over disputes in the South China Sea, and spent Monday on ceremonial visits that looked back to a time of warmer relations between the neighbours.

But while the Chinese seemed eager to avoid the issue of conflicting claims of sovereignty over the Spratly and Paracel Islands, the Vietnamese pushed it forward by reminding Beijing of Hanoi's position.

The local Communist Party newspaper Nhan Dan juxtaposed front-page pictures of Mr. Jiang's arrival with a smaller photo of singers entertaining Vietnamese sailors on the Spratly Islands.

Press coverage of Vietnam's local elections Sunday also put unusual emphasis on voters going to the polls in the barely populated South China Sea islands.

Mr. Jiang, however, made it clear that the Chinese would prefer to play a waiting game on the Spratlys, moving ahead with other issues while pledging to resolve the problem peacefully.

"There is no denying that there exist problems between China and Vietnam," Mr. Jiang told Vietnamese President Le Duc Anh at a banquet late Sunday.

But the Chinese president added: "We should try not to let these problems, which cannot be settled immediately, stand in the way of the development of relations between the countries."

Rival maritime claims, as well as long-running problems over their land border, have lent a permanent sour note to relations. Yet the world's two largest Communist states have expanded economic links since resuming diplomatic relations in 1991. After talks with leaders

here, Mr. Jiang, the first head of China's Communist Party to visit Vietnam, spent the day harking back to the era when the two sides described themselves as being "as close as teeth and lips."

He laid wreaths at a war memorial and at the mausoleum of independence hero Ho Chi Minh, once a close ally of China's. Mr. Jiang also held a meeting with retired Premier Pham Van Dong, who governed Vietnam for nearly 30 years.

Mr. Jiang later visited a tobacco factory built with Chinese aid in 1957 and the Temple of Literature, a university founded along Confucian lines nearly a thousand years ago.

Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen, a member of the more than 130-strong delegation travelling with Mr. Jiang, held talks with his counterpart, Nguyen Manh Cam.

Richard Gere 'ready to divorce' Cindy Crawford

LONDON (AP) — Richard Gere was lying low in London, after a tabloid newspaper published photos purportedly showing a 22-year-old model making early-morning getaways from his apartment. The weekly News Of The World quoted an unidentified friend of Gere as saying, "He thinks Laura is very sweet and sees his future with her." Three photos showed Bailey leaving what the newspaper said was Gere's posh apartment building in London's Chelsea area. In one picture, she is hopping over a garden wall to the yard of the building next door. Her facial expression is noticeably vexed. There was no sign of Gere at his apartment after the report appeared. Bailey has been spotted on the street early in the morning in the past, but she has said that she was visiting a girlfriend who lives next door. Gere, a Buddhist, met Bailey at a party thrown last July by his religious mentor and friend, the Dalai Lama, the News Of The World said. It said that Crawford, 28, and Gere, 45, had placed their \$5.5 million Hollywood home up for sale, and that they want an amicable divorce. "It's in the hands of lawyers and he keeps bugging them to sort it out," the paper quoted the unidentified "friend" as saying. Gere is in Britain filming First Knight, in which he plays Sir Lancelot opposite Sean Connery's King Arthur.

Some Chinese maps can get you lost

BEIJING (AP) — If near-sighted shoppers start going to Tiananmen Gate looking for new eyeglasses or people start trying to order food from the army guards at Mao Tse-Tung's Mausoleum, blame it on the maps. Maps of Beijing and Shanghai are full of errors like the ones that put the Daming Spectacles shop on top of the old city gate that faces Tiananmen Square and mislabels the final resting place of revolutionary leader Mao as 'Yueshengzhai', a restaurant that specialises in beef and is located down the road from the mausoleum, according to a report in Monday's Guangming Daily. The Shanghai government office in charge of maps has received scores of letters pointing out more than 150 errors in the official Shanghai city street map. Errors in Beijing maps include moving 2,000-square kilometre (1,240-square mile) Changping County, a community of 300,000 people, from the outskirts of Beijing to the next province, and mislabeling the Beijing Library as the Beijing Drawing Gallery and the China History Museum as the Wangfujing branch store. The errors are not limited to city maps of China. Maps of China incorrectly label Hainan Island in the South China Sea and world maps have international borders in the wrong places, the report said. The government has issued several laws governing map production, but they are not often enforced. With a 50 per cent profit margin on map-making and the increasing need for maps as Chinese become more mobile, it is easy to see why the map market has gotten out of control, the paper said. The Beijing City Planning Research Institute every year uncovers more than 10 cases of illegally printed maps. In some cases, they are patched together, cut-and-paste-style, from existing maps on the market. In other cases, printing firms use their connections to get copies of approved maps to reprint.

U.K. on alert for invasion of plastic ducks

LONDON (R) — An armada of 29,000 plastic toy ducks are bobbing their way towards the coast of Britain, the Times newspaper said Monday. "Britain should be put on duck alert," Dr. Curtis Ebbesmeyer, an oceanographer from Seattle, Washington who has been using computer simulation to track the toys, told the newspaper. The animals, which also include some blue turtles, red beavers and green frogs, were washed overboard in heavy seas from a container ship in the North Pacific in January 1992. They had been frozen in the Arctic Sea but are expected to be carried south by the Gulf stream, completing their 12,000 mile voyage on the British and Irish coasts.

'State tried to kill Mandela in 1969'

NEW YORK (R) — Nelson Mandela was nearly killed in 1969 while a political prisoner in a state-sponsored assassination plot disguised as an escape attempt, the South African president says in his forthcoming autobiography.

Mr. Mandela, in an excerpt of his autobiography appearing in the issue of Time maga-

zine hitting newsstands this week, said he thwarted the plot by refusing to cooperate in the escape bid.

"It was not the last time, they would try to eliminate me," he said in the excerpt.

In an excerpt published in Britain, Mr. Mandela said his estranged wife, Winnie, showed poor judgment over

her use of private bodyguards but was not guilty of any serious offences.

Mr. Mandela described the assassination plot in a section recounting his time in South Africa's Robben Island Prison. He was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1960 for high treason.

France proposes EU fund to solve disputes

PARIS (R) — France, the next president of the European Union, Monday proposed creating an EU fund to help potential future members in Central and Eastern Europe settle border and minority disputes.

Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, who initiated an EU drive for a European stability pact, told a seminar at the French parliament that good neighbourly relations were a condition for EU membership since the union did not want to import conflicts.

Suu Kyi backs democracy movements

MANILA (R) — Detained Burmese dissident leader Aung San Suu Kyi, in a speech delivered in absentia, attacked tyrannical regimes Monday and urged the United Nations to support democracy movements around the world.

The speech by the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize laureate — under house arrest in Burma for six years — was read by former Philippines President Corazon Aquino, a

democracy campaigner who led a 1986 popular revolt that toppled the late Ferdinand Marcos from 20 years in power.

"In the speech to an Asia-Pacific regional conference of the U.N. agency World Commission on Culture and Development (WCCD), Ms. Suu Kyi challenged the view among authoritarian governments that economic growth was paramount to democratic

reforms.

She said this "can be a recipe for disaster."

She slammed arguments that democracy was a Western concept alien to indigenous peoples of Asia and Africa and that democratic rights should give way to economic development.

A rapid democratic transition strengthening of civil society is necessary to develop societies genuinely she said.

France opposes early enlargement of NATO

PARIS (Agencies) — France said Monday that a hasty enlargement of the NATO alliance or the Western European Union (WEU) to include Central European states could lead to more, rather than less, instability in Europe.

French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur appeared to be responding to U.S. pressure for the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) to take new steps towards enlargement at its ministerial council next month.

Mr. Balladur told a seminar on European stability in Paris: "The aim is not to speed up the enlargement of security bodies such as NATO or the WEU. Everyone is well aware that the sudden inclusion of new countries in these alliances could cause more instability than stability on our continent."

He made no direct reference to the U.S. drive for the Atlantic alliance to begin discussing with Central and East European countries "the how and why but not yet the who and when" of NATO membership.

The U.S. administration is mapping out a strategy for bolstering European security through gradual expansion of

NATO and a new upgraded role for the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).

The proposals to be presented at the NATO ministerial meeting in Brussels and the CSCE summit next month were to allay Russian concerns of a threat from any eastward expansion of NATO.

Russia has long argued that the CSCE — of which it is a member — should take on the role of ensuring post-cold war security in Europe, a position that has been met with some support from France.

Secretary of State Warren Christopher heads to Brussels next week to propose criteria for NATO membership at the ministerial meeting scheduled for Dec. 1 and 2.

President Bill Clinton was to put forward his vision of a stronger CSCE at its Budapest summit on Dec. 5 and 6, a move expected to lead to the birth of a new Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Eastern and Central Europe are in need of a "forum for preventive diplomacy, economic aid and environmental cleanup," a State Department official said ahead of the two key

events.

The war in the former Yugoslavia has shown that "the CSCE is the organisation of the future because it has in its broader mandate the ability to deal with territorial disputes and ethnic tensions, and NATO does not," he said.

Mr. Clinton, who discussed NATO's future with Russian President Boris Yeltsin in September, won support from Russia for widening the military alliance "as long as it is done gradually, carefully and in a transparent manner," a U.S. diplomat said.

Countries eligible for entry into the security alliance would have to show commitment to democracy and to free markets while proving their ability to adapt their defence capabilities to NATO standards, a condition viewed by many as difficult to meet.

NATO membership would have to be approved unanimously by the 16 member-states of the Atlantic alliance and by the U.S. Congress in line with treaty provisions.

The move towards new European security arrangements comes after a controversial U.S. decision to stop enforcing the Bosnian arms embargo sparked tension in Washington's relations with NATO allies.

The U.S. military presence in Europe has also reached its lowest level in 40 years, prompting concerns among European leaders that new mechanisms must be put in place to compensate for the trimmed-down U.S. support.

Mr. Clinton was to propose that the CSCE play a more active diplomatic role in mediating conflicts including the ongoing war between ethnic Armenians and Azeris for control of Nagorno-Karabakh, an ethnic Armenian enclave located inside Azerbaijan.

He was also to urge member-states to take one role in overseeing future peacekeeping operations and develop a framework for conventional arms control and non-proliferation issues.

The CSCE was also to be asked to help rehabilitate the former Yugoslav states which have taken hard economic hits from the 31-month war in Bosnia and the international embargo.

The CSCE, born out of the 1975 Helsinki Accords, has long focused on human rights issues but a loose structure and limited powers have prevented the organisation from taking on greater European security challenges.

Japan acknowledges Pearl Harbour blunder

TOKYO (R) — Japan has acknowledged for the first time that it blundered in not delivering a diplomatic cable to the United States signalling the start of war until its forces had already attacked Pearl Harbour.

Foreign Ministry documents from the period released at the weekend blamed a "lack of urgency" by Japan's Washington embassy staff in delivering the cable, which Tokyo was withdrawing from talks aimed at avoiding war.

Japan attacked the U.S. military base at Pearl Harbour on Dec. 7, 1941, without a declaration of war.

A ministry statement issued with the newly declassified documents apologised for not passing on the cable. "There is no room for excuse," it said.

It was the ministry's first official recognition that Japanese diplomats had blundered over the start of war.

Many historians say that if the document announcing the end of the negotiations had been delivered earlier, the United States could have anticipated attack and taken precautions at its bases.

The Pearl Harbour raid by Japanese carrier-based planes in the early morning hours of Dec. 7 dealt a devastating blow to the U.S. Fleet. According to the documents, the Foreign Ministry in Tokyo sent a total of 13 secret memoranda on the negotiations to the Washington embassy. All of them were decoded there by a telegrapher by the evening of Dec. 6.

The telegrapher then left the embassy to attend a farewell party for a returning diplomat. First Secretary Shozo Okumura, who was supposed to type a clean copy, went home, leaving the work until the following day.

A top-secret 14th memorandum, which announced Tokyo's withdrawal from the talks, was dispatched on the morning of Dec. 7 and decoded by noon Washington time.

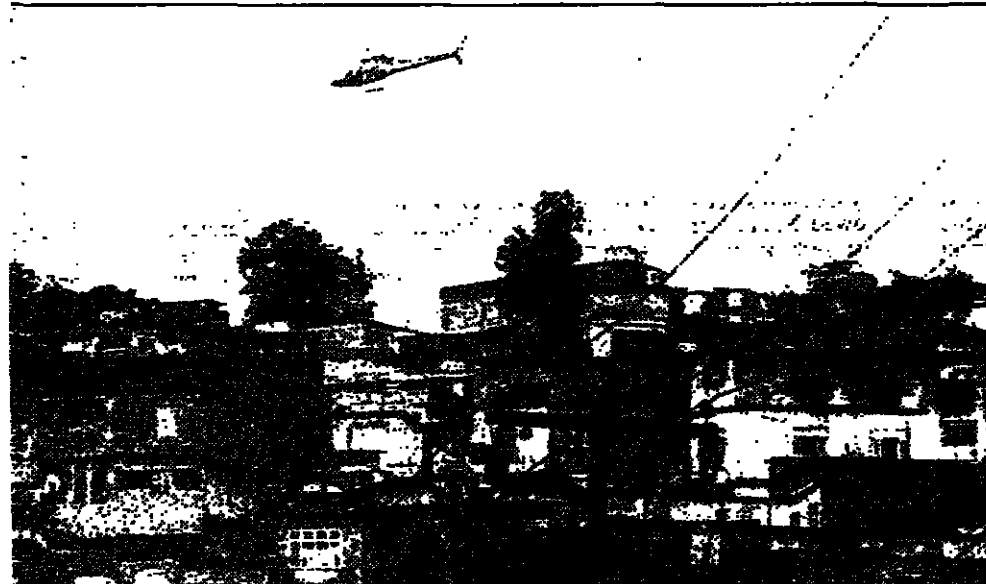
It was supposed to be delivered by 1 p.m. on Dec. 7, just 25 minutes before the Japanese warplanes started

the attack on Pearl Harbour, but its fair copy was not ready before 1.25 p.m. by then the Japanese air raids had set off the Pacific War.

The 14th memorandum was actually handed over to U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull only at 2.20 p.m., according to the documents.

The Foreign Ministry concluded that the memorandum was not processed in time because embassy personnel in Washington failed to realise the decision to break off talks meant war.

A ministry investigation primarily blamed Mr. Okumura for the delay, saying there was "professional negligence at the governmental establishment abroad (the embassy)."



A Brazilian army helicopter flies low over the hillside shacks of the shantytown of Dende in Rio de Janeiro. Some 1,500 federal army troops are taking part in a government operation launched in Rio's slums aimed at cracking down on the illegal trade in fire arms and drugs (AFP photo)

Soldiers camp for 2nd night in Rio slum

RIO DE JANEIRO (Agencies) — Brazilian army soldiers were preparing to spend a second night occupying one of Rio de Janeiro's crime-ridden shantytowns in the military's three-week-old crackdown on drug-related crime.

In scenes more reminiscent of a war zone than the city of Samba and Sun, local television showed soldiers in the slums lying flat on the ground, holding guns, faces painted in battlefield green. "But it was unclear if the sandbag shelters many crouched behind were there to protect the soldiers from snipers or from the heavy rains falling in recent days. Flanked by helicopters and

tanks, the soldiers moved into two shantytowns Saturday morning.

After seizing drugs, firearms and a stash of money discovered in an abandoned shack, the soldiers withdrew from one of the slums this afternoon.

The crime crackdown, announced by President Itamar Franco on Oct. 31, was noticeably low-key until Friday afternoon when soldiers set up temporary checkpoints at the entrance of five slums throughout the city.

The troops detained more than 150 people in the massive sweep across slums that officials said Sunday was hitting hard at the city's drug trade.

"Organised crime has abandoned the area," Col. Ivan Cardoso told reporters. But federal forces remained active in nearby Dende, and Col. Cardoso said troops might move into any of the 600 shantytowns surrounding Rio de Janeiro in the upcoming days.

In Mangueira, a total of 128 people were detained, including three young offenders authorities believe are linked to the drug mafia, but only 18 were turned over to the police anti-drug unit.

In Dende, military forces detained 39 people and navy gunmen vowed to remain in the district until every house believed to be a refuge for drugs and arms trafficking was searched.

"The main thing is not the number of arrests, drugs or arms seized but rather that drug dealers leave the shantytowns," said Colonel Luis Casserio.

In Dende, one 35-year-old man, Jose Luis Nunes Sobrinho, was hospitalised, suffering from a gunshot wound he claimed to have received from government troops.

Residents interviewed earlier in some of the shantytowns said the number of drug dealers and buyers had fallen markedly since the army began Operation Rio Friday.

"Even though the troops left Friday after patrolling the neighbourhood, the drug buyers disappeared," said one resident in Andaraí, one of the seven hillside shantytowns where nearly four million of the city's 9.5 million residents live.

During the operation, Mangueira and Dende were sealed off by army tanks and barbed wire while some 1,600 soldiers and navy gunmen combed the area.

Checkpoints were also set up in other parts of the state to prevent drug dealers from fleeing the region.



A young resident of the shantytown of Mangueira, Rio de Janeiro, looks at a Brazilian army soldier as he patrols the outskirts of the slum district (AFP photo)

Richard Gere 'ready to divorce' Cindy Crawford

LONDON (AP) — Richard Gere was "ready to divorce" Cindy Crawford, according to a tabloid newspaper. The article, published in the Sunday Mirror, claims that the couple's marriage is in trouble. It says that Gere is "fed up" with Crawford's "diva" behavior and that he is considering leaving her. The article also mentions that Crawford is "not happy" in the marriage and is looking for a way out. The couple, who have been married for several years, are both famous actors and models. The article is part of a series of reports about the couple's relationship.

Some Chinese maps get you lost

BEIJING (AP) — It has happened again: a Chinese map has shown a territory that does not exist. This time, it was a map of the border between China and Russia. The map showed a large area of land that is not part of either country. This is a common problem with Chinese maps, which often show territorial claims that are not recognized by other countries. The problem is caused by the way that Chinese maps are made, which often use outdated information. This can lead to confusion and even to international incidents.



A French U.N. soldier mounts his APC in Sarajevo, after the U.N. Protection Force soldiers in Bosnia went to top "red alert" at 1:00 p.m. (1200 GMT). The alert for the

about 18,000 UNPROFOR soldiers in Bosnia came after the U.N. Security Council authorized NATO air strikes against Croatian Serbs in their Krajina enclave (AFP photo)

Japan ushers in new era of voting

TOKYO (R) — Japan's parliament enacted a set of long-awaited measures designed to clean up the country's scandal-prone politics Monday, clearing the way for possible early general elections in 1995. The passage of the electoral reform bills, the first overhaul of the multi-seat electoral system since 1925, is certain to put at least minor pressure on Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama to call early polls, lawmakers said. Mr. Murayama need not call general elections before mid-1997, but ever since June when he came to power as the head of an unwieldy Socialist-Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) coalition, the opposition has clamoured for early polls. The reform package, first submitted by then-Premier Toshiki Kaifu in 1991, is designed to make election campaigns less costly. Campaigns were blamed for the country's money-driven politics. Under the outgoing system, candidates for a ruling bloc were forced to run against each other in a given constituency which elected between three to five deputies. There were a total of 130 districts for the 511-member lower house. The system meant that a politician could be elected with as little as 10 per cent of the vote. Candidates also competed to outstep opponents and so became prone to doing favours in exchange for campaign funds. Since the Recruit "shares-for-favours" affair of 1988, pressure has mounted on Japan's political establishment to clean up its act. Prime Ministers Noboru Takeshita, Mr. Kaifu and Kiichi Miyazawa all lost their jobs because of links to shady campaign money or inability to push through electoral reforms. The new bills, when they come to force on Dec. 25, will introduce single-seat districts for 300 constituencies in a new smaller 500-seat lower house, with the rest elected through proportional representation. Under the new system voters would get two ballots — one for a candidate in each of the 300 single seat contests and the other for a specific party which is required to publish a list of separate candidates running in the 11 regional constituencies totalling the other 200 seats. The 200 seats are allocated according to the percentage of votes the parties receive. Lawmakers said the new system meant more policy-oriented elections rather than ones geared to purely local issues. Other measures include

27 die as Angola celebrates peace pact

LUANDA (AFP) — At least 27 people died and 187 were injured bullets when Luandans celebrated a pact to end Angola's civil war, hospital sources said Monday as the countdown to a formal ceasefire began. The deaths came after government and rebel leaders signed the peace accord in the Zambian capital Lusaka Sunday. Police said civilians were killed by random shots in this shabby but lively South Atlantic port city. Police put the toll at 24 and some 60 wounded and said that 30 soldiers and armed civilians had been arrested for opening fire, but the higher figures were issued to Radio Luanda and the private Radio Lac by separate medical sources. The victims were the latest casualties in a war that has claimed more than 100,000 lives in the two years since a previous peace agreement collapsed when the rebel UNITA movement refused to accept it had lost U.N.-supervised elections. UNITA Monday called for national reconciliation. Its radio interviewed several officials of the movement, who stressed that wanted to "forget the past" and the war that followed independence from Portugal in 1975. Red tracers lit up the night sky over Luanda's bay Sunday evening as the firing of light arms, machine-guns and anti-aircraft batteries made up for a singular lack of enthusiasm for the peace accord earlier in the day. During the hours of sunshine pleasure-seekers went about their business on the beaches and in beachfront cafes with barely a glance at live television transmissions of the ceremony meant to end 19 years of civil war. The pact is already viewed as suspect because of the absence of the signatures of President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos and the leader of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) Jonas Savimbi. But in the evening, the city lived up to the U.N. hanger at Luanda airport "took 15 shots," said Major Mike Nasamu of the U.N. Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM). "An aircraft was hit three times, but we think it was just celebratory firing," he said. The last shot in anger in the civil war is due sometime Tuesday, before a formal ceasefire comes into effect some 48 hours after the signing of the accord. The rebel chief did not turn up for the signing ceremony in Lusaka. His spokesman said a government offensive had made it impossible for him to leave Angola. The pact was signed by UNITA General-Secretary General Eugenio Manuvela and Angolan Foreign Minister Venancio De Moura. Major Nasamu told AFP that he had no information on fighting Monday, although he confirmed reports from both the government and UNITA that clashes had continued as the peace accord was being signed Sunday.

IRA's admission in holdup death points to renegade elements

LONDON (AFP) — An Irish Republican Army (IRA) confession that its members killed a postal worker in a bungled holdup has rekindled long-held beliefs that renegade dissident factions are still active within the organisation. In a terse weekend communique, the IRA apologised for the death of Frank Kerr, 33, shot dead in the Nov. 11 holdup of a post office in Newry, County Down. "IRA volunteers acting on instructions were involved in this incident," said the statement, which did not stipulate where the instructions originated. But the statement denied the IRA leadership had sanctioned the holdup, saying, "responsibility... lies with an unidentified problem in the army's chain of command and not with the volunteers involved." The admission that those involved in the killing were acting on instructions resulting from a chain-of-command problem was seen by observers as suggesting that an IRA figure senior enough to issue such instructions, had missed the point of the IRA's Sept. 1 ceasefire pledge. The IRA statement added: "We have established that Frank Kerr was shot in the

midst of an intense scuffle with one of our volunteers and we take this opportunity to offer sincere apologies." It stressed the IRA's "commitment to the success of the peace process." The confession has reinforced the belief, held by some politicians on both sides of the Irish Sea, that dissident factions within the IRA were at odds with the ceasefire and intended to pursue violence. Sinn Fein Vice President Pat Doherty denied the existence of a dissident IRA faction, and insisted there was no reason to delay starting talks with London. "I think the talks will

Ghali: World mafias threaten democracy

NAPLES, Italy (R) — U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali branded organised crime a threat to democracy Monday and urged governments to join forces to fight off the growing menace of the world's mafias. Opening a three-day ministerial conference on cross-border crime, he told delegates from 138 countries that the tentacles of "crime multinationals" had spread across the globe. "In Europe, in Asia, in Africa and in America, the forces of darkness are at work and no society is spared," Dr. Ghali said. "The charter of the United Nations is based entirely on the values of democracy and the dignity of human rights. Transnational crime, however, undermines the very foundations of the international democratic order," he told the gathering. "It poisons the business climate, corrupts political leaders and undermines human rights." The conference, being held amid massive security in the

crime-blighted southern Italian port of Naples, is the highest-level meeting the U.N. has ever called on organised crime. It takes place at a time of mounting alarm at the speed with which traditionally clanish organisations such as the Hong Kong-based triads, Italy's mafias, the Japanese yakuza and Russian groups are beginning to make deals with each other. U.N. experts say international crime syndicates now turn over a combined \$750 billion a year — more than the economic output of most countries and much of it "laundered" through the global financial system. Dr. Ghali cited the collapse of communism and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, regional conflicts and social decay in countries of the Third World as developments which had all contributed to the explosion of organised crime. "When order is in retreat, and when law, morals and democracy are under attack, all kinds of criminal ventures and deviant behaviour may be spawned. This is what we

NATO jets hit Krajina airfield

SARAJEVO (R) — NATO launched a massive 30-warplane attack on an airfield in the Serb-held area of Croatia Monday. The raid came after Serb aircraft attacked targets in the Bihac enclave of north-western Bosnia last Friday and Saturday. NATO said British, Dutch, U.S. and French warplanes took part in the attack on the Udbina Airfield Monday in close coordination with the United Nations Protection Force in former Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR). "The air strike... was in response to attacks which had been launched from that airfield against targets in the Bihac area of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the past few days," said the NATO statement issued in Brussels. NATO Southern Europe Commander Admiral Leighton Smith said the attack, launched from Italy, was successful and all aircraft returned to base. In Zagreb, the head of UNPROFOR, Yasushi Akashi said the strike was aimed at preventing further use of the Udbina Military Airfield. The air action today was a necessary and proportionate response to the continued use of this airfield for hostile air attacks against the Bihac pocket of Bosnia-Herzegovina," Mr. Akashi said in a statement which made clear he first gave authorisation for a strike Sunday. NATO sources said the alliance launched a raid on the Udbina Airfield Sunday but called it off because of bad weather. "It must be recalled that three air raids have been launched in the past two weeks from the airfield at Udbina. These air raids have included the use of napalm and cluster bombs and have caused civilian casualties and have hit the Bihac 'safe area'," Mr. Akashi's statement said. "I hope that today's NATO air attack will deter any further attack on the Bihac safe area and its surroundings, or on UNPROFOR personnel within Bihac," the U.N. envoy added. Mr. Akashi said the air strike was carried out in a manner to limit as much as possible any collateral damage or civilian casualties. He appealed to the leaders of the Serb-controlled Krajina region of Croatia to respect Bosnia's sovereignty and allow unimpeded passage for humanitarian aid convoys into the Muslim-controlled Bihac pocket. Mr. Akashi, noting his authority under Security Council Resolution 836 to use air power, said: "On Sunday, I used that authority to request NATO to conduct a limited air strike on the air field at Udbina in the Serb-controlled territory of Croatia, with the objective of preventing further use of the airfield." He also asked all parties fighting in Bihac to "give immediate consideration to the establishment of a local ceasefire."

Later Monday, NATO warplanes struck a second time at the Serb-held air base of Udbina in Croatia, the Yugoslav News Agency said. It quoted Serb military officers in the area as saying the second raid occurred shortly after 1300 GMT and that the aircraft hit the base and the area around it. There was no immediate confirmation from NATO that a second raid had been mounted. U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali said Monday he supported the NATO air strike. "My reaction is as long as it was decided with my special representatives who had received the mandate — and it was decided in conformity with the resolution of the Security Council and cooperation with NATO — it is something positive," he told reporters. Russian President Boris Yeltsin Monday backed the U.N. Security Council's decision that allowed NATO air strikes against Serb positions in Croatia. Mr. Yeltsin, speaking to reporters, said: "Krajina Serbs (in Croatia) to some extent violated international agreements and launched air raids which is inadmissible." It was not immediately clear if Mr. Yeltsin, who was speaking after a ceremony to receive the credentials of ambassadors, already knew of the NATO air raids on the Serb airfield in Croatia. But Mr. Yeltsin said Moscow's representative at the Security Council had been ordered to support such attacks. "Our representative there voted for such a decision because the international community must be respected," he said. Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic welcomed Monday's NATO air raid. "We would have liked it sooner, but it is never too late," he told CNN television. He had earlier complained NATO was being slow to react to the Serb bombing of Muslim towns in the enclave of Bihac. Mr. Silajdzic said the NATO air raid on Udbina Airfield in Croatia underlined that Serb forces were attacking Bosnia from across international boundaries and the 31-month-old conflict could not be classed as a civil war. He criticised European governments for failing to allow the Bosnian government the right to defend itself, referring to the reluctance of many countries to lift the arms embargo on his government. Earlier Mr. Silajdzic had asked whether NATO was waiting for the heavy Serb assault on Bihac to turn the northwestern enclave into a "mass grave" before it reacted. NATO said Monday 39 allied aircraft took part in an attack on the Serb air base but intentionally avoiding hitting aircraft on the ground. NATO Southern Europe Commander Admiral Leighton Smith said the raid on the Udbina Air Base had been successful and had also destroyed Serb anti-aircraft installations and a surface-to-air missile site in the area. Adm. Smith, briefing reporters at NATO Southern Headquarters in Naples, said the strike was in response to two Serb air attacks from Udbina on the Bihac pocket. "Clearly the signal has been sent. Our hope is that it has been received," Adm. Smith said. But he said U.N. forces in former Yugoslavia, which requested a strike, had specifically asked NATO not to hit Serb planes on the ground in order to avoid collateral damage. He also said in response to questions that the raid was not of sufficient magnitude to put the runway at Udbina fully out of commission. "Sniper fire killed a man on Sarajevo's main street shortly after the NATO raid, eyewitnesses said."

Berlusconi tastes defeat in Italy local elections

ROME (R) — Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi was tasting his first electoral defeat Monday as the party that thrust him to power looked set to take a beating at the hands of the opposition and a rightist party in his coalition. While members of his Forza Italia party said the first round elections for councils in 242 towns had only local significance, the opposition crowded victory and editorial writers said Mr. Berlusconi would have to take the results seriously. "For Silvio Berlusconi this is something more than an alarm bell," said the Corriere Della Sera newspaper. Forza Italia, which took more than 30 per cent of the vote in the European Parliament elections in June, appeared to be paying the price of an unpopular austerity budget. According to exit polls Sunday Night, Forza Italia, the party Mr. Berlusconi founded to stop the rise of the left in last March's national elections, was due to suffer the worst defeat of all political groupings involved in the local elections. Support for Forza Italia was running at 10 to 15 per cent in the seven big towns where the exit polls were carried out. About 80 per cent of the 2.6 million eligible voters cast ballots. Early results from 12 cities in Sicily were in line with the predictions. According to the exit polls, opposition candidates in five of the seven big cities involved in the polls would come out on top in mayoral races. But none were seen winning an absolute majority and the two leading candidates in cities with populations of more than 15,000 would likely take part in the Dec. 4 run-off elections. In voting for town councils, Mr. Berlusconi's party was roundly beaten by the former communist Democratic Party of the Left (PDS), which joined forces in some of the big cities with the Popular Party, the former Christian Democrats. Forza Italia also lost support to the hard-right National Alliance, whose leader,

Gianfranco Fini, has seen his personal popularity soar in recent opinion polls. "The right is standing but Forza Italia is limping," Rome's La Repubblica newspaper said in an editorial. The National Alliance had surpassed Forza Italia in overall strength in most of the big cities involved in the exit polls. The National Alliance, seeking to distance itself from its neo-fascist roots, was set to become the biggest group in the cities of Brindisi and Pescara, according to the exit polls. The federalist Northern League consolidated its position as the leading party in strongholds such as Treviso and Sondrio. The Northern League consolidated its position as the leading party in strongholds such as Treviso and Sondrio. The Northern League is the other main partner in an uneasy coalition government that took office six months ago. The boost for Mr. Berlusconi's two partners, who are frequently at each other's throats, is unlikely to make his job easier as the prime minister struggles to keep his coalition together. Mr. Fini said the coalition parties, which fielded separate rival candidates in many areas, needed to join forces. "This shows that if government parties run together then the opposition will be beaten almost everywhere," Mr. Fini said. Northern League leader Umberto Bossi said the polls showed that his party remained a force to be reckoned with. Forza Italia members tried to play down the results. "Let's not dramatise this outcome. It's because of the budget," said Forza Italia Deputy Vittorio Dotti. "We had to deal with a disastrous financial situation and all the international observers have said the budget is positive." The austerity budget aims to slash the deficit by \$30 billion in 1995. The Lower House is set to approve it Monday but it then faces a rough ride in the Senate where the government does not have an absolute majority.

Major warned tough measures needed to keep support

Conservative voters feel "the reality is now that the rich are getting richer on the backs of the rest, who are getting poorer." Privatisation, the hallmark of 15 years of unbroken Conservative rule, was not popular, the report says. Figures show the British economy is growing at an annual rate of more than four per cent, but the "feel-good factor" has still not seeped through to the High Street, where consumers remain wary because of high levels of unemployment. Public anger over huge pay rises to bosses of privatised companies boiled over again Monday when news leaked out that the head of British Gas, Cedric Brown, had earned a 75 per cent increase, taking his annual salary to £475,000 (£745,000). The news followed last week's announcement that gas prices will rise by 7.9 per cent next year, above the rate of inflation. "Most of the people in this

country... will be angry and appalled at these excessive pay rises at a time when people are facing a cut in their living standards as a result of tax rises and are about to face a rise in their gas bills," the opposition Labour Party's economics spokesman Gordon Brown told BBC Radio. To increase pressure on Mr. Major, Labour, which leads the Conservatives by 25 points in opinion polls, revealed plans to enbce rebellious Conservative lawmakers to defy the government on three key votes in the next few weeks. Defeat for Mr. Major would be highly embarrassing and could even provoke an early election. Mr. Major does not have to hold elections until 1997. The prime minister has warned rebellious Conservative members of parliament he will treat a vote next week on a bill to increase Britain's payments to the European Union as a matter of confidence, meaning he would call elections if he loses. Mr. Brown said Labour would try to push through an amendment to the government's budget bill scrapping a planned tax increase on heating fuel to 17.5 per cent from eight per cent. With up to eight Conservative rank-and-file MPs already threatening to vote against the European bill and with a thin majority of just 14, the government faces a bruising start to the new session of parliament which began last Wednesday. In a third challenge to the government, Labour is also planning to persuade rebel Conservatives to back a move giving the post office more commercial freedom. In an embarrassing reversal, the government was forced to scrap a plan to privatise the Royal Mail after a rebellion by around a dozen MPs, worried that the possible closure of rural post offices could threaten their seats.

U.K. on alert for invasion of plastic ducks

LONDON (AP) — British customs officials are on alert for a possible invasion of the country by plastic ducks. The alert was issued after a report that a large number of plastic ducks had been found in a field in the south of England. The ducks were found in a field that was previously used for duck farming. The report was made by a local farmer who said that he had found a large number of plastic ducks in his field. The farmer said that the ducks were not his and that he had found them in a field that was previously used for duck farming. The farmer said that he had found a large number of plastic ducks in his field. The farmer said that the ducks were not his and that he had found them in a field that was previously used for duck farming.

By Rami G. Khouri

Jordan Times

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Chairman of the Board of Directors:
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MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:
GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:
Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 667171/6, 670141-4
Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO
Facsimile: 696183

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Driving the point in

THINGS ARE maybe shaping up for road safety in Jordan if all the local rhetoric about making driving in the country safer for both drivers and pedestrians comes to fruition. Jordan has lately witnessed a sharp upsurge in road accidents that claimed unprecedented number of lives. The concerned authorities appear to be responding to the carnage on our streets but we wonder how effective or even serious the response is. For example, the Traffic Department is currently conducting monthly programmes that aim to rehabilitate taxi drivers who have developed a habit of flouting every safe driving code in the country. The organisers of this "reeducational" campaign hope to awaken irresponsible drivers to the need to operate their vehicles in accordance with applicable road safety guidelines. This suggests that the crux of the problem we face is strictly a matter of reeducating drivers as to what is acceptable and what is not when it comes to driving on national roads and highways. We beg to differ on this score.

All Jordanians with a valid driving licence know only too well what the rules of the game are. The problem with so many of them is not lack of knowledge about what constitutes reasonable driving habits but rather the actual disrespect for the laws. Who among the so many reckless drivers around does not know that a stop sign means real stopping instead of the current interpretation of such signs as mere decorations or better still as a licence to proceed forward at full speed? We also do not understand the apparent concern of our authorities to educate drivers when traffic policemen themselves have yet to take seriously all driving rules and not only speeding and illegal parking. Everything else seems to be ignored, including orderly driving within lanes (when they are visible), observing the right of way and other driving courtesies that are nowhere to be found in the Jordanian driving culture. It is going to take more than two days of lecturing to transform dangerous driving in this country into a safe one. Maybe the seminar on safe driving, that the police department will conduct next week in cooperation with the National Swedish Institute for Consultation, will open new avenues for making driving in Jordan less hazardous.

What the country actually needs is a new driving culture that is safe and courteous. This is no easy task, but a beginning must be made. Perseverance on the part of the concerned authorities in making driving in the country safe is a sine qua non for any real change. When the traffic police themselves are ill-motivated and do not care less about any traffic violation except speeding and illegal parking, the central problem lies with the police and not the public. Unless our guests for next week, the Swedish experts, fully comprehend the essence of the problem, their contributions may not be as useful as we all hope it will be. What we need is not abstract advice but down-to-earth remedies that are commensurate with our pressing needs.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIIST in Al Ra'i daily Monday demanded that the Ministry of Industry and Trade set and apply specifications and measurements that can safeguard public health and protect Jordanian people's interests. Tareq Masarweh cited the example of the shipment of tomatoes that was Sunday returned to Jordan after failing to pass Israeli quality control and specifications tests saying that bad quality products, including tomatoes, are sold daily in the Jordanian markets which are not subject to control of any kind. Many of the locally-produced goods and imported commodities are of a quality far below the internationally-accepted levels of specifications, including foodstuff, which are consumed in Jordan, said the writer. He recalled that a shipment of contaminated rice and coffee was consumed here as were consignments of meat unfit for human consumption. Even cars that are sold in Jordan are lower quality than those sold in other Arab states, he said. There can be no real protection to people's health through regular Health Ministry regulations, said the writer who demanded the Ministry of Industry and Trade set specifications which can help control all kinds of items sold in the Kingdom.

AL DUSTOUR daily reflected on the Jordanian-Qatari relations in light of a visit to Doha by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and talks held in Jordan by the Qatari Information Minister Dr. Hamad Kuwari. The visit and the talks, said the paper, usher in a new era of fruitful cooperation between the two sister countries thanks to the directives of the leaderships in the two countries. While expressing our deep satisfaction and delight over these developments, we can only hope that Qatari-Jordanian relations would set ideal example for the other Arab countries, including the states of the Gulf Cooperation Council, continued the paper. It said that Jordan hopes that the strong ties between Qatar and Jordan would open the door for similar relations between Qatar and Jordan and the rest of the Gulf states so that they can together lead the way towards reestablishing solidarity among Arab states.

The View from Fourth Circle

Fighting to avoid the sad margins of history

The recent clashes in Gaza between Palestinians and against the PLO-Israel accord are not only about Hamas, Yasser Arafat, Islam and the ideology of the majority of Palestinians. They are about something far deeper, for they have ushered in the Palestinian hour of historical reckoning. The next half year or so is likely to indicate whether the Palestinians are a viable people who can exercise their right to a sovereign state, or whether they are only a demographic limb of the greater Arab World that got caught and was snapped off in the claws of European colonialism and Zionism.

The shock of Palestinians being killed by other Palestinians is real, but is rather overplayed in the media. Palestinians have been killing each other for many years, as have Arabs in many other parts of the Middle East. There are few if any Arab countries where the police and army have not routinely attacked their own people in the name of security and development. This is regrettable, but not unusual in the Arab World.

The real cause of the shock about the fighting in Gaza is what it suggests to us about the Palestinian future. It holds out the unimaginable spectre of perpetual marginalisation, of a people relegated to the peripheral status of a semi-free, semi-caged, quasi-nation ruled by the political laws of petty local gangsterism. It is an ugly but still possible prospect. The most important underlying reason for the violence in Gaza is the sudden clarity of how weak is the PLO-Israel peace process, and how limited are the Palestinian gains from it to date, in the face of two other factors that now require attention: the successful Jordanian-Israeli peace accord, and the option of violent resistance against Israel, as Hamas and Islamic Jihad have shown. Most Palestinians compare their predicament with the successful Jordanian peace treaty and they find the situation quite humiliating; they are not necessarily angry at Jordan, but rather at Israel and at their own Palestinian leaders. Further Palestinian resentment is fuelled by another huge and compelling contrast: on the one hand, Israel treats Yasser Arafat as an errand boy, subjects him to demeaning demands, and tells him he will have no more gains to show for his diplomacy until he fulfills Israel's demands; and on the other hand, Palestinian Islamists strike fear into the hearts of Israelis by bombing them in their own homes.

The inability of the PLO to significantly improve the life quality of Palestinians living under Israeli occupation has emphasised the PLO-Israel peace accord's real weaknesses, while neutralising its potential strengths. Perhaps this could not have been avoided, given the imbalance between

Israel's strong negotiating position and the frail Palestinian position. Nevertheless, fourteen months after it was signed the PLO-Israel accord appears to most Palestinians to be an ignoble and humiliating document, little more than a cruel, empty promise. Arafat and Company appear unable to make it work any better than it has to date, and the trigger-happy performance of the Palestinian police has only made Arafat look more brutish and repugnant in the eyes of many of his own people.

This situation has been exploited by the Palestinian Islamists, though their position remains weakened by the fact that they cannot offer a credible alternative other than violent resistance. Nevertheless, for many Palestinians facing the choice between Arafat's slow motion surrender and the Islamists' heart-throbbing resistance, the Islamists look much more attractive.

Arafat has three obvious options, and one not so obvious. The three obvious ones are, a) cracking down further on the Islamists (which will only make them stronger and more popular), b) speeding up the implementation of the peace accord by getting the Israelis to withdraw, holding the Palestinian elections and securing the international funds pledged for improving the Palestinian economy (which would revive his political credibility but perhaps not fully), and, c) keeping the situation as it is (which would slowly see his position become totally untenable).

The slightly less obvious option is for Arafat to address his two key partners, both of whom are hurting him, namely the Palestinian Islamists and the Israeli government. He might consider calling a Palestinian national conference, identifying the weaknesses in the peace accord, and then joining forces with the Islamists and demanding from Israel that the accords be renegotiated. The aim of reopening negotiations would be to address those issues that remained open in the current accord, namely settlements, refugees, Jerusalem and final borders and security.

If Arafat can address the weak points of the peace accord and show Israel that he speaks on behalf of all Palestinians, he may be able to bring enough pressure on Israel to secure the concessions he needs. The Israeli government may have good cause to meet him halfway, for Arafat's downfall would also probably mark the downfall of Rabin and his Labour government and the return of a Likud-led government. It is in Israel's interest to see Arafat succeed. Clearly, if Arafat did nothing new in the coming months he could only survive this crisis by becoming an increasingly

autocratic, isolated and violent leader, and he would then surely be thrown out in a coup or a popular revolt.

The precipitous decline of the Palestinian authority in the last half year is not synonymous with the abdication of Palestinian national rights. For many Palestinians do not accept Arafat's leadership or his peace process. The frightening possibility that stares Palestinians in the face, however, is that Palestinian national rights may have little chance of being achieved through any process other than that which Arafat has now launched, because most of the Arab states have made it clear that they are prepared to make peace with Israel even if the Palestinian problem remains unresolved. In other words, the Palestinians are discovering that they may be relegated to a fate along the lines of Lebanon during its civil war, Bosnia, Rwanda, Somalia, Iraq and other distressed lands — chronic domestic strife, human suffering, national denial, and the rule of local political gangs, while the rest of the world shrugs its shoulders in emotional sadness but political disinterest.

This prospect is so demeaning for a Palestinian people who have struggled for their rights for nearly a century that it is unlikely to materialise. Unlikely, but still possible. This is why Palestinians are so desperate to get out of their present predicament, even at the risk of using their guns against each other. This is also what is happening in most of the rest of the Arab World, by the way — disenchanted, scared people turning to religion, and even to violence, to challenge or to change their political leaderships and their national policies.

Palestine is doing today what the rest of the Arabs did from the period between 1920 and the 1960s: it's trying to change from a situation of foreign occupation to one of self-rule and independence, and in the process domestic groups are competing for power. The fact that the Palestinians are the last Arabs struggling for independence, while the rest of the region seems to have taken its modern political shape, scares many Palestinians, because they fear that their rights might be sacrificed in the end to the region's obsession with stability and security.

This makes Arafat's challenge all the more urgent. He must improve the terms of the peace accord or implement it more quickly and meaningfully. How he responds to this challenge will largely determine if Palestine moves towards real national independence and rights, or if it slips into the bloody and neglected margins of modern history, where fear, anger and violence are chronic, and nobody cares.

Can Arafat survive Gaza shootings?

By Robert Mahoney
Reuter

GAZA — Palestinians had long expected tensions between Islamic opponents of the PLO-Israel peace deal and Yasser Arafat's fledgling government to burst into the open.

But when Arab actually began shooting Arab in the streets of Gaza, birthplace of the uprising against Israel, Palestinians were traumatised.

Threats of revenge for the killing of at least 13 Gazans by Mr. Arafat's police last Friday are now scrawled on walls and predictions of a slide to a Lebanese-style civil war abound.

As the initial shock subsides, Gazans are asking: — Will the narrow band of Mediterranean coast crammed with one million impoverished and stateless people turn into another Beirut?

— Will the experiment in Palestinian self-rule, cornerstone of entire Arab-Israeli peace process, be undermined?

— Can Arafat survive the killing of his own people?

"We have all the ingredients for a civil war," replies Iyad Sarraj, a psychiatrist and member of a human rights watchdog group.

"Polarisation is so acute, arms are everywhere, tension is high, and more than anything we have undisciplined armies on both sides," he said, referring to Mr. Arafat's security forces and gunmen from the Muslim groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

M. KAHIL



But he, like many other prominent Gazans, does not believe that the religious and clan differences are as explosive here as in Beirut.

Hamas and Islamic Jihad, both foes of Mr. Arafat's peace deal with Israel, have pulled back from the brink of civil strife.

"Hamas is very concerned there be no civil war against Palestinians," said Sayyed Abu Musameh, a Hamas leader who tried to mediate to cool passions after the

shootings.

Hamas urged its fighters to turn their guns on Israelis, not Palestinians, as radical gunmen and those who had lost relatives vowed vengeance.

The more moderate political elements in Hamas complained to Mr. Arafat that the shooting had weakened them and their attempts to reach a political accommodation with the Palestinian authority.

Mr. Arafat, ignoring calls

from Israel and hardliners in his own Fatah wing of the PLO for a crackdown, has courted not clubbed Hamas, which claims a 30 per cent following in Gaza.

Behind the militant Hamas rhetoric, much of which comes from outside, many leaders in Gaza do not want to see Mr. Arafat toppled, Hamas sources say.

They do not like the peace process but realise they cannot halt it. They believe Mr. Arafat is the only one who

can steer the Palestinians through the shoals of the first stages of the self-rule deal with Israel.

"If we want influence to shape the outcome we have to talk with Arafat... and continue our struggle against Israel," one Hamas official said.

Such sentiments are spurned by Hamas radicals who openly call Mr. Arafat a traitor, doing Israel's dirty work in Gaza and the West

Bank. They say Mr. Arafat has no mandate to rule. Even if Hamas as an organisation vents its wrath on Israel rather than the PLO, they will avenge the deaths.

"There is a possibility of assassinations on both sides, and that could hit Arafat," said Mr. Sarraj, who predicted a rollercoaster of violence and suppression for some time to come.

The prospect of instability could deter those private investors and international donors whose money Mr. Arafat needs to rebuild an economy shattered by occupation and by Israel's refusal for security reasons to allow in Gazan workers.

Just hours before Friday's shooting, the United Nations senior official for Gaza and the West Bank, Terje Larsen, warned donors the peace process and the legitimacy of the Palestinian authority faced potential collapse unless money arrived.

Haidar Abdul Shafi, a former peace negotiator trying to mediate between Hamas and the PLO, blamed Israel for not implementing the deal it signed with Mr. Arafat fully and quickly. Gazans had seen little economic or social benefit from peace and were losing faith in the process, he said.

Asked if Mr. Arafat had lost his legitimacy, Mr. Abdul Shafi was diplomatic.

"It is too drastic to say that... The work of the national authority is less than we expected, there are differences all around. (But) we are not silent. We hope things will improve."

U.S. wants to expand NATO, boost CSCE

By Patrick Worsnip
Reuter

WASHINGTON — The United States is planning a major shift of emphasis on European security policy aimed at quickly expanding NATO while boosting the 33-nation European security conference, U.S. officials say.

They say the aim is to better address the needs of former Soviet-bloc states that have thrown off communism and are now in a hurry to reach Western economic prosperity levels and assure their security in the post-cold war world.

Since the Berlin Wall fell five years ago, these states have been clamouring to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, the European Union and any other Western grouping that will have them.

Until recently, the U.S.-led Western alliance had been holding them at arm's length, offering them "part-

nership" with NATO but being vague on when they can actually join.

Now, the idea is to admit the first wave of new members, widely expected to comprise Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, sooner rather than later — in three to five years, U.S. officials say.

NATO ministerial meetings early next month are expected to agree guidelines for taking on new members, which will then face a difficult period of adjusting to alliance requirements on equipment and training, as well as financial costs.

But State Department officials say they have persuaded the Pentagon to stop dragging its feet over such issues. "The department of defence was saying up to two weeks ago that anything before the year 2000 was unrealistic," one official said. "They're not saying that now."

One of the main problems with NATO expansion

has long been that Russia, which is highly unlikely to be offered membership, strongly opposes the inclusion of its former Warsaw Pact allies in the alliance.

But Washington now maintains this is not an insuperable obstacle. "Key people (in Russia) have accepted the fact that NATO expansion is inevitable," said an administration official. "All they want is for the process to happen in a transparent manner."

If so, there has been little public sign of it so far.

"What we are objecting to is expansion of NATO to the direction of the borders of the Russian federation, without giving the Russian federation a chance to be within NATO," a senior Russian official said in Washington last week. He added that the move could lead to calls for rearmament in Russia.

U.S. officials say that NATO is a security

ity concerns are not uppermost in the minds of East European states.

"If the European Union was moving quicker, these guys wouldn't even be trying to get into NATO. What they need is the economics," said a senior official. The EU is not expected to admit the East Europeans before the turn of the century.

Enter the other "track" of the new U.S. policy — expanding the role of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).

Born in the 1970s as a forum for debating East-West detente and human rights, the CSCE has since the end of the cold war been held up as a possible super-organisation to control European security. Russia, which belongs to CSCE, would like it to dominate over NATO.

But the CSCE has so far failed to live up to its promise, held back from effective action by its rule of

near-consensus and by the determination of Western states that NATO will remain the top security body in Europe.

Despite some useful work in tackling ethnic problems in the Baltic states, the CSCE has made little headway in resolving the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh and plans for it to send a peacekeeping force there now look in trouble.

The United States, after years of paying lip service to the organisation, now says its talk of upgrading the CSCE is for real — despite the view of sceptics that it is designed mainly to compensate Russia for the expansion of NATO.

Officials say as evidence of this that a tussle within the U.S. administration over whether President Clinton should attend a CSCE summit in Budapest Dec. 5-6 has been decided in favour of him going.

The officials are still declining to discuss exactly what new powers the CSCE

could be given, or how it is going to overcome the consensus rule that has shackled it hitherto.

However, some officials have hinted that the CSCE, which currently has a tiny secretariat based in Vienna, could be given a more powerful council similar to that which NATO has, and may be renamed an organisation instead of a conference.

Apart from "preventive diplomacy" to head off new Yugoslavia-style wars, something the CSCE has already attempted with limited success, they suggest energy and environment questions could rise up its agenda.

Another suggestion is that it could take over responsibility for agreements preventing arms proliferation. "Everything the (East European) emerging democracies need can be made available through the CSCE, but can't be through NATO," one official said.

Features

Majali returns from Doha

(Continued from page 1)

strong bilateral ties based on mutual respect and advocated the cause of safeguarding the sovereignty of all states in the region and underlined the need for non-interference in the internal affairs of any country by another," it said.

"The two countries stressed the need for resorting to international laws and the International Court of Justice as a means to settle disputes among countries of the region so that higher national interests can be safeguarded and inter-Arab confidence deepened," it added.

The communiqué said the two sides discussed ending the Iraqi people's sufferings. They reaffirmed the need for safeguarding Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity and praised Baghdad's recent recognition of Kuwait in accordance with U.N. Security Council Resolution

833, voicing hope that the decision would signal the beginning of the return of peace, security and stability to the Gulf region," it said.

The two sides reviewed the situation in Bosnia and voiced support for the Bosnian people in their ordeal and condemned Serbian aggression on the Muslim people.

They appealed to the international community to help put an end to aggression and implement U.N. resolutions.

The two sides tackled preparations for an Islamic countries' summit meeting due to be held in Morocco and reviewed topics on its agenda.

Dr. Majali voiced appreciation of the hospitality accorded to the Jordanian delegation during the visit and both sides voiced their pride in the Qatari and the Jordanian leaderships, expressing desire to pursue efforts in coordinating policies in different fields.

Rabin wins U.S. pledge

(Continued from page 1)

anything on that that would undermine the possibility of the parties making peace. I think that ought to be the position that all Americans take."

U.S. foreign aid has come under fire from Republicans who are expected to make big cuts when they take over Congress next year.

Mr. Rabin had warned his cabinet following the Republican's November 8 sweep of the congressional elections that the United States might be "less inclined to pay out foreign aid."

But Israel's \$3 billion in annual aid is considered safe for the time being, as is Egypt's \$2 billion package, since they are the main pillars of U.S. policy which are expected to hold steady under the new Republican congressional leadership.

What Mr. Rabin is hoping for, however, are extra funds to support Yasser Arafat in his struggle against the challenge by Islamic fundamentalists.

The Israeli leader is to meet Thursday with Mr. Arafat in Madrid on his way back home, Israeli and Palestinian

negotiators resume talks on self-rule elections and an army redeployment in the occupied West Bank next week.

An Israeli official said Mr. Rabin is seeking emergency contributions from donors, who have so far released only \$100 million of the \$700 million pledged for Palestinian self-rule for 1994.

Mr. Rabin on Monday accused Israeli hardliners of trying to sabotage his peace moves with Syria by lobbying in the United States against deploying American troops on the Golan Heights.

"Heed not the stupid, empty words being heard today as if out of concern for the Americans (but) which emerge from a desire to sabotage the chance of peace," he said in Washington remarks broadcast on by Israel Radio.

Israeli media said three leading Israeli hardliners were trying to discourage U.S. lawmakers from backing any presence of U.S. troops on the Golan, even as monitors, in a future Israeli-Syrian peace deal.

Kuwait, Russia sign deal

(Continued from page 1)

Kuwaiti counterpart Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah, and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah.

The emirate's information minister, Sheikh Saud Al Sabah, said there was "total agreement on all issues discussed."

The Russian official leaves Tuesday morning to the United Arab Emirates, the third leg of his Gulf tour that started in Saudi Arabia. He will also visit Oman.

Saudi Arabia's foreign minister was quoted on Mon-

day as saying Russia is reassuring Gulf states it wants Iraq to comply with the U.N. sanctions and does not just want them lifted.

Prince Saud Al Faisal, after meeting with Mr. Chernomyrdin on Sunday, was quoted by Al Hayat newspaper as saying that Russian efforts "are not to lift sanctions against Iraq as much as to make Iraq implement all Security Council resolutions."

"This is obvious not only to the kingdom (Saudi Arabia) and Russia but also to Iraq," he told the London-based newspaper.

Time to speak out

(Continued from page 1)

teration is interpreted as sexual harassment depends on who says what under which circumstances. It is also a culture-specific issue."

But when a woman says no, she means no, and that is what many men do not want to understand or accept. "There is a clear distinction between friendly interaction and sexual harassment, and it is known to the man," says Dr. Amiri.

In her mind, sexual harassment is a way to seduce women. "Indirectly the man is telling the woman that the street is not her place, that her place is the home, if she wants to be respected," Dr. Amiri explains, adding that "in many cases harassment actually leads to the seduction of women, because parents, out of fear that their daughters might be harassed, lock them up in the home."

Experts underline that sexual harassment of women is a universal phenomenon, to be found in all patriarchal societies. The types and intensity of harassment, however, vary according to cultural circumstances. "In a strongly male-oriented, gender-segregated society, men need to reaffirm their male identity constantly in front of other men, and one way to reaffirm this identity is to prove themselves in front of women," says Dr. Amiri.

The socio-economic situation also has its

effects: While sexual relationships are limited exclusively to marriage, unemployment and low wages make it increasingly difficult for many young men to get married, a situation which causes sexual frustration.

Sabri Rubelhat, a former police officer, sociologist and TV presenter who has carried out scientific studies about violence against women, says that the strong sex segregation in Jordanian society contributes to the sexual frustration of men.

"Many men do not know how to interact properly with women because they never had the chance to learn it," he says.

Ms. Dajani think this explanation is an excuse. "Men do interact with women," she says, "they interact with their mothers, their sisters, their fellow students, at work. They have the opportunity. They simply refuse to accept them as equals."

Besides gender segregation, it is lack of social control that leads men to indecent behaviour, states Dr. Rubelhat. Contrary to the neighbourhood, where everybody knows each other, the street is an anonymous place where men do not have to fear sanctions, he says.

Basma, a nursing student, has her own explanation. "I do not wear a veil, but I care a lot about Islamic values. I think that too many men have abandoned

By Anore Thierry

Ile-de-France, whose capital is Paris, is the biggest French region. Today it risks choking. The government and the city council are working on its future with a view to balancing its development with that of other regions and improving the everyday life of its inhabitants.

"Paris and the desert of the rest of France." Is this expression, used nearly thirty years ago, still valid today? Is all of France's energy concentrated in Ile-de-France, with its 10.6 million inhabitants (19 per cent of the population of the whole country) in an area of only 12,000 square kilometres, to the detriment of her 22 other regions? Other figures also reveal how dynamic it is. The Paris region employs 22 per cent of the working population in the country and its unemployment rate is below the national average (7.4 per cent in 1990 compared with 9.4 in the provinces). The working population in the Paris area also includes many executives (41 per cent of the total num-

ber in France and researchers (59 per cent). The same is true of higher education as 28 per cent of French students are in Ile-de-France. The result of this is that its gross domestic product accounts for 28 per cent of the national GDP.

This dynamism also has its drawbacks. Although other regions vegetate or find it hard getting off the ground, the rapid growth of the Paris area, in all directions, risks choking the region itself. There is already considerable traffic congestion on the roads and a saturation of public transport, increasing difficulties in housing (particularly for those of modest means), a scarcity of land, the giddy rise in the price of houses and flats, the disappearance of natural areas and an increase in pollution. In short, the living conditions of the inhabitants in Ile-de-France are gradually getting worse. These are adequate reasons for the government and regional authorities to set about implementing an improvement policy. It is true that there is an "improvement

ment and town planning scheme" which has drawn up the main lines of the development of Ile-de-France and guided the public choices concerning infrastructures (roads, motorways, new towns, Regional Express Metro system, etc.), but it goes back to 1976.

So, few years ago, Michel Rocard, at that time, prime minister, but also the mayor of a town in Ile-de-France, set about having the "improvement and town planning scheme" revised. His purpose was to draw up the general plans of the region for the year 2015, concerning means of transport, urban development, and the location of economic activities and amenities, particularly for training. This was no easy task and, in addition to members of the government and civil servants, it mobilised mayors, regional councillors and deputies, as well as representatives of professional organisations and associations, heads of firms, trade-unions, town planners and engineers.

Other elements in the rough draft aim at the reestablishment of the balance between work and housing (at present, many inhabitants of modest means live in the east and north of the region and work in the west which is growing richer by having wealthier residents live there and by receiving industrial and service activities with a high added value); the diversification of accommodation in each town; the rehabilitation of dilapidated districts; the promotion of five centres said to be "of European excellence" (Paris-Roissy in the

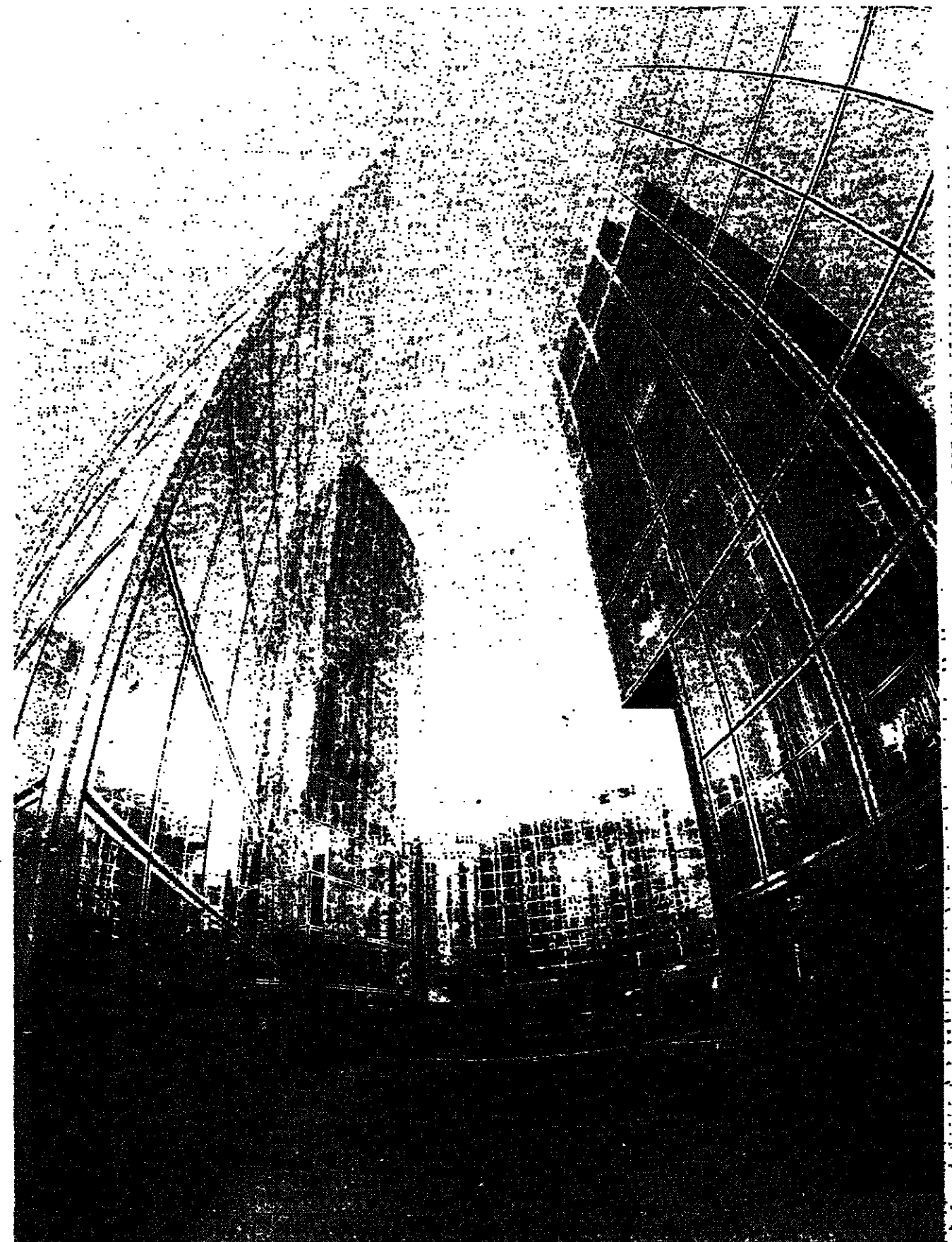
north, Marne-la-Vallée-EuroDisney in the south-east, Saclay-Massy-Orly in the south and La Défense in the west); a continuation in the growth of new towns (extension and the creation of universities); a strengthening of average-sized towns such as Fontainebleau or Rambouillet and the development of market towns in rural areas (Provins, or Coulommiers).

Similarly, public transport also needs to be rethought and public funding devoted, in priority to it (the Regional Express Metro systems needs to be doubled, new quick

links need to be created between Paris and Roissy, and there should be interconnections with the TGV (high-speed train). Private financing should also be sought for future motorways. The environment should not be forgotten either as there will be a "green plan" for the protection of forests, valleys, exceptional ecological settings, agricultural areas as well as plans for water, quarries, waste disposal and noise. The final scheme will be voted at the end of 1992.

L'actualité en France

Paris 2000 — towards controlled growth



Crucial choices before 2000 for a Paris of the future

"Although other regions vegetate or find it hard getting off the ground, the rapid growth of the Paris area, in all directions, risks choking the region itself. There is already considerable traffic congestion on the roads and a saturation of public transport, increasing difficulties in housing (particularly for those of modest means), a scarcity of land, the giddy rise in the price of houses and flats, the disappearance of natural areas and an increase in pollution."

ber in France and researchers (59 per cent). The same is true of higher education as 28 per cent of French students are in Ile-de-France. The result of this is that its gross domestic product accounts for 28 per cent of the national GDP.

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Preliminary studies resulted in a report, in February 1990, presenting a detailed assessment and drawing the main lines for the future. After a long and sometimes stormy period of consultation within the commissions and work groups, inside the regional council, a rough draft of the plan was established in April. After a few modifications, it was finally adopted at a meeting of an Interministerial Town and Country Planning Committee.

The essential point on which everybody agrees is that the demographic growth of the region has to be controlled, otherwise it will choke. The hypothesis is to limit the population to 12 million inhabitants (whereas spontaneous development would result in 15 million) and to offer 750,000 new jobs. These measures aim to satisfactorily meet the needs of the present residents and their children in housing, training, work, traffic, leisure and culture. This choice breaks with earlier trends. Thus, the outskirts of Gre-

there to protect me from this kind of thing."

Few women take the pain of reporting sexual harassment to police. On the other hand, men in particular, but, astonishingly enough also women, often do not recognise sexual harassment as a problem.

"Once a guy tried to kiss a woman inside our faculty building. We reported the event to the dean of the faculty and asked him to take action, but nothing happened," a group of female students at the University of Jordan says.

It is apparently difficult to talk about sexual harassment in public, but women's experiences indicate that it is high time to do so. "I think sexual harassment is a problem, and probably, particularly the women themselves, should speak about it. Newspapers, radio and television should raise the issue," says Basma.

Women should be encouraged to request their rights and to protest against sexual harassment, whenever it occurs, she says. Specific law rules and punishment can have an effect, but are of limited value, since they do not solve the underlying problem.

"Of course, our cultural and moral values are different from others, and every culture judges behaviour according to its own standards," says Dr. Rubelhat. "But we live in the modern world, where women participate naturally in public life. Men, all men, must learn to interact with women on equal and respectful basis, whether at home or in public."

Algerian opposition meets

(Continued from page 1)

The FIS was banned when violence erupted after the military cancelled the January 1992 second round of general elections the fundamentalist party was poised to win.

Mokhtar Maghrawi, the group's advisor for relations with the United States, told the symposium "mass murder and assassination have become the norm" for the Algerian authorities, charging that "torture experts" had been drafted in from Egypt to that end.

He also attacked Paris, which has outlawed the FIS on its territory, for its "cowardly colonial practice," including banning the Islamic head scarves in

schools, and "disguised presence" in Algeria.

Mr. Haddam said his group had accepted Sant'Egidio's invitation in order to "exchange our points of view in a free environment."

The talks could be a "staging post towards serious negotiations," he said.

But in a reference to Algiers' will ingness to debate the country's crisis with other legal opposition parties, he warned that "those who attempt to sideline one or other part of the mujahadeen will prolong and intensify the bloody conflict."

Mr. Haddam told journalists that government recognition of the FIS was the only way out of the current impasse, and that "terrorism" was the province of the state's security forces.

Mr. Ben Yahya charged that the authorities had imprisoned 17,000 people — most "administrative" detainees — in camps in southern Algeria since 1992.

The Sant'Egidio community and the participants themselves described the symposium as a "first contact" between FIS representatives and the Algerian opposition, and stressed that it in no way stood for official negotiations.

The seriousness with which the Algerian authorities viewed the affair was expressed by a weekend summons to the Italian ambassador in Algiers, Patrizio Schmidlin, and to Catholic Nuncio Edmond Ferhat, to the foreign ministry.

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Khalaf says proper interaction with Israel will benefit Jordan

By Samir Shafiq Ghawi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Industry and Trade Minister Rima Khalaf sees the peace era ushering three main developments: opening to the Israeli economy, change of perception by investors towards the Mideast and reconstruction of the Palestinian economy after the occupation ends.

Speaking at a business dinner hosted by the Jordan Trade Association Sunday evening, Dr. Khalaf said Jordanian exports face two challenges — how to penetrate the Israeli market and how to cope with the additional competition in traditional markets as these markets will be open to Israeli products as a result of ending the Arab boycott of Israel.

Dr. Khalaf pointed out that it would not be easy to sell in Israel because of intense competition. American and European products enter Israel free of customs because of free trade agreements signed with the countries, she noted.

The minister said that specifications and incentives out-

side the scope of customs could play a role in reducing the volume of industrial goods or produce which could be exported.

Dr. Khalaf briefly described the Israeli economy by highlighting the following features:

1) Total Israeli economic output amounts to \$65 billion, more than the economic output of Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Palestine put together. Per capita income exceeds \$13,000 (1992) compared to \$1,120 for Jordan.

2) Industry represents 31 per cent of gross domestic product, one third of industrial output being in the equipment and electronic sector.

3) Products exported by Israel are valued at \$14 billion, of which \$13 billion are industrial. Israeli exports are of high quality as well as competitive as Europe and America import two-thirds of these exports.

4) Israel's economy gets new technical and scientific skills every year through immigration. Immigrants of such skills represent 70 per cent of the total of new immigrants.

5) Free financial assistance



Industry and Trade Minister Rima Khalaf addressing a group of industrialists and businessmen Sunday evening (Petra photo)

and transfers amount to \$6.5 billion each year.

6) Israel spends \$3 billion a year on developing and upgrading its infrastructure of roads, water network, electricity and industrial parks.

7) Israeli industrial products enjoy total exemption from customs in the European Union countries and in the United States as well as the countries of the European Free Trade Association

(EFTA). Similarly European and American products have a special competitive edge in Israel as they are customs-free.

8) Spending on research and development in Israel amounts to 2.4 per cent of national income. This percentage exceeds what each of France, Britain and Korea spend on research and development.

Despite driving home the message of the Israeli economy being technologically advanced and characterised by stiff competition, Dr. Khalaf saw the Israeli market as one with a consumption volume of \$60 billion.

The minister said she saw large opportunities to export to the Israeli market, due to its size and its geographic location bordering Jordan, and predicted a big increase

in foreign exchange earnings as well as an increase in production and employment.

However, the minister stressed the need to upgrade the quality of Jordanian products and to concentrate on labour-intensive products which benefit from the relative advantage of low wages.

"Investing to improve the quality is well-worth and gives returns that by far ex-

ceed the costs," she asserted. Dr. Khalaf further elaborated on the challenges facing the Israeli economy by bringing up the disequilibrium in labour matters especially the large wage differential between the two markets.

"Such a differential will give rise to pressure and to economic forces to hire the less costly labour in the production of goods or in providing services," she pointed out.

As such, "these forces will push in one of two directions: Either the labour flows to the market of higher return and thereby Jordanian labourers move to work in Israel or in Palestine, or the capital flows to the low-cost country and thereby Jordan would attract the investment for meeting the need of cheap production costs."

The minister said Jordan's own policies and investment climate would determine which way labour or investments would move.

However, what Dr. Khalaf saw as more important and much beneficial than the increase of production and employment, were the opportu-

nities that would result if foreign investments chose Jordan as their base in the region.

"Foreign investment is the tool to transfer the technology and efficient productive practices would improve the quality and boost competitiveness," she said.

But she cautioned that there would be fierce competition over foreign investment which would vary depending on the investment climate in the countries of the region.

"We enjoy relative advantages in terms of production costs and financial stability but we have certain shortages in the infrastructure and legal aspects. Our investment environment suffers from a weak public sector and low efficiency which result in vagueness in applying the laws and in unjustified complexities in the work process," Dr. Khalaf conceded.

The minister told the audience that the government was keen to build the right economic structure for the coming era and urged the private sector to play a leading role to enhance the national interests of the Kingdom.

U.S. needs to raise interest rates substantially — OECD

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States must raise interest rates substantially over the year to curtail inflation and keep the economic expansion on track, according to the influential Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

In its annual survey of the U.S. economy, the OECD also urged Washington to cut special security pension benefits and tackle growing inequities between rich and poor to help ensure America's long-term financial well-being.

The Paris-based OECD acts as a think tank for rich industrial nations. Its recommendations are not binding but can play a role in shaping economic policy of its members.

The organisation said it expects U.S. economic growth to slow moderately next year — to 2.9 per cent from 3.8 per cent this year — and inflation to accelerate modestly — to 2.8 per cent from 2.1 per cent, as measured by the gross domestic price deflator.

"(Economic) performance has been remarkably good over the past two years, and the fundamentals seem sound for the immediate future," the 26-nation OECD said.

But it warned that an economic bust could follow unless the economy is cooled off through higher interest rates.

"Short-term rates will have to rise substantially more by the end of 1995," it said.

The U.S. Federal Reserve (Fed) the nation's central bank, last week raised short-term rates by three-quarters of a percentage in its boldest attack on inflation in 13 years.

The move, which was criticised by labour and corporate leaders as unwarranted, pushed three-month treasury bill rates up to 5.3 per cent.

The OECD sees those rates averaging 6.3 per cent in the second half of 1995 and warned they may need to rise even more to prevent inflation from increasing too far.

The dollar dropped to a post World War II low against the Japanese yen earlier this month, but has since recovered somewhat, thanks partly to heavy buying by Washington and comments by U.S. Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen that he favoured a strong U.S. currency.

The OECD warned, however, that the dollar could face fresh selling pressure if the Fed does not raise interest rates far enough or fast enough.

"Without adequate and timely policy tightening, it is unlikely that any amount of exchange-market intervention or supporting commen-

tary will succeed in satisfying the concerns of private international investors," the organisation said.

The United States will remain heavily dependent on those investors to finance its economy next year as the OECD expects America's current account deficit, which includes trade in goods and services, to widen to \$161 billion in 1995 from \$147 billion this year.

That's why it's vital to reduce the government budget deficit, the organisation said. And health care reform alone won't be enough.

"It is in social security that far-sighted policy makers will have to seek further cuts," the OECD said.

That recommendation is sure to raise the ire of President Clinton, who vowed repeatedly during his Democratic Party's recent losing congressional election campaign not to cut social security.

In other politically charged comments, the OECD backed comprehensive health care reform, voiced some doubts about the efficacy of welfare reform and said a radical overhaul of the tax system might be useful to discourage consumption and promote savings.

It also gave poor marks to America's primary and secondary education system, calling it "mediocre best" and saying it did not serve the poor well.

Arab Gulf financial markets need liberalisation

DUBAI (R) — Arab Gulf states need to liberalise share trading and their financial sectors to develop the region's markets, analysts said.

"The GCC countries must push for shares to be traded across boundaries forming in effect a regional capital market," Henry Azzam, chief economist at Saudi Arabia's National Commercial Bank, said at a banking conference Sunday.

"A regional market would help to avoid the problems encountered because of the small size of the local mar-

kets, pool resources and provide financial institutions with greater placing power," he said.

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) are Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Bahrain.

There are few bond issues partly due to the absence of a regional ratings agency and some GCC governments do not allow foreign or other Gulf banks to operate in their countries.

"(They should) pull down

the barriers separating the already small financial markets of the GCC, which have proven so far to be working basically to the disadvantage of the GCC financial operators," Abdul Wahab Al Tammar, former governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait, told the conference.

He said financial institutions should "prepare for a future based on a single GCC market."

But Abdullah Al Saudi, former chief executive of Arab Banking Corp (ABC) said Arab banks continued to suf-

fer from the "parochial interests" of the Gulf countries.

"In the case of ABC and many other banks, we have tried to serve our home market, but we have found our home market mostly unwelcoming and protectionist even against its own," he explained.

He said until Arab banks were able to pursue regional business more freely "I think we can only hold out modest ambitions for Gulf banks' ability to satisfy the region's

demands for global financial services."

Analysts also said Gulf financial institutions needed to adhere to international standards of accounting and disclosure to boost their credibility.

Jassim Al Mannai, director general of the Arab Monetary Fund, said Gulf states should set up a consistent regulatory framework to encourage a secondary capital market and introduce deposit insurance schemes to boost stability.

Oman begins privatisation of electricity sector

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The Gulf state of Oman has started privatising its electricity sector as part of overall reforms to make its economy immune to volatile oil prices, industry sources in the region have said.

A \$70 million company is being established to set up the first major power station to be operated by the private sector while two other similar projects will be carried out soon, sources said.

The United Energy Company (UEC) has started floating around 11 million shares worth \$30 million for local and foreign investors while \$45 million have been subscribed by its founding shareholders.

Three Belgian companies are shareholders in the com-

pany while the International Finance Corporation has contributed around \$4 million, part of its participation in privatisation plans in the sultanate.

UEC is the first private power company to be created in the Gulf, where most countries have embarked on reforms to offset weak oil prices.

Saudi Arabia, the world's leading oil producer and exporter, also has plans to privatise its large electricity and telephone sectors.

Oman has launched the biggest reform programme in the region as it has opened its stock market to citizens from other Gulf states, sold five key institutions to the public and is planning to set up major projects in participa-

tion with the private sector.

The projects include two electricity plants in Salalah and Minah, a sewage project in Muscat at a cost of \$599 million, a similar project in Salalah at a cost of \$130 million, a \$700 million petrochemical complex and \$9 billion gas liquefaction plant.

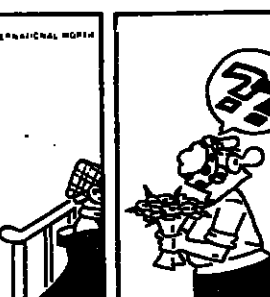
Another ambitious project involves building a pipeline to supply natural gas to India at a cost of more than \$5 billion. But it was not clear if the private sector would be allowed to participate.

Oman has invited scores of companies and private investors from around the world for a conference in Muscat next month to explain its reforms, which it hopes will attract foreign capital.

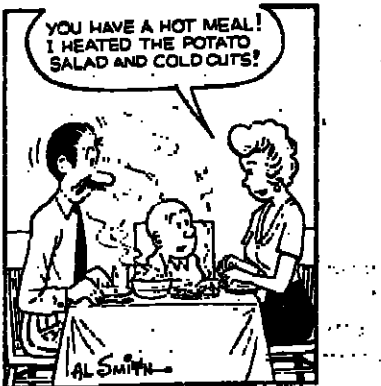
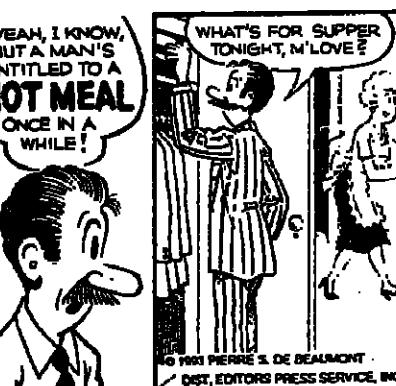
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



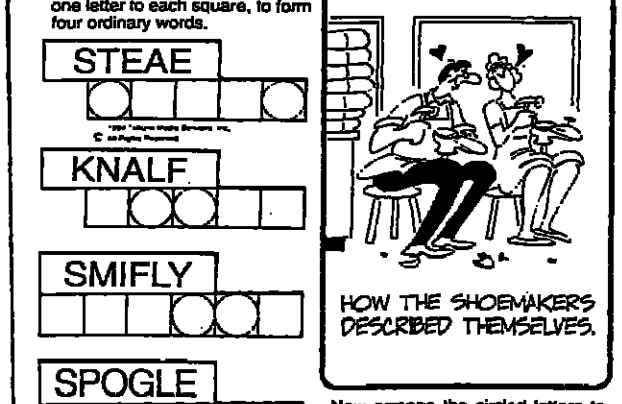
THE BETTER HALF

By Glasbergen



JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Answer here: " " " " (Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: FUDGY AMITY THWART DOMINO

Answer: An ambitious cowboy's life is filled with this — GIDDAP AND WHOA

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY NOVEMBER 22, 1994
By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: An associate may argue seriously with a higher-up today but be sure that you don't get pulled into discussion for no matter where you stand on the subject you will lose. Keep occupied with your own tasks.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Start the week right by getting into property interests that require attention and build up a new structure while tonight avoid a wacky companion.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You can take a good look at yourself during the day and can improve considerably whatever you stand on the subject tonight keep your purse/wallet zipped.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You need to get private information for a better way to have your mundane affairs cancelled in the day and tonight study plans for the future.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You can make considerable progress in gaining a long time desire so concentrate upon this today and tonight don't let a worry get you down.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Start today right by tackling outside duties during the daytime and you make big progress while tonight don't try to gain a difficult personal aim.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 21) All kinds of advance plans that can be helpful to your

development for sometime to come are in effect during the day but tonight avoid the public limelight.

LIBRA: (September 22 to October 21) This is the day for you to get into whatever obligations you have assumed as you can do them very well but tonight don't get into new interests.

SCORPIO: (October 22 to November 21) Sit down and talk out reasonably and amicably a problem with an associate and it is soon solved but tonight don't continue the discussion.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) A fine day to commence the week by achieving fine result where your promised work is concerned so get at duties early, later avoid a discontented associate.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You can start the week with real vision and imagination about how to make your creative skills work in your field but tonight force work load.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Don't hesitate this first day of a new week to carry through with what you have agreed to do for family members and tonight avoid expensive pleasures.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Getting out the various communications that await your attention can be done with detailed efficiency now after which don't get in a family argument.

THE Daily Crossword by Melvin Karmworthy

ACROSS

1. A (puzzle)
2. Painful life
3. Free
4. Stewing pot
5. Dies
6. Summer house
7. Portal
8. Deck officer
9. Eventually
10. Child's game
11. Particular
12. Bugle call
13. Name used to complete columns
14. City, Utah
15. Do well
16. Papal vestment
17. Blue colors
18. Toss
19. Essay
20. Mine prop
21. Volcanic output
22. Iron or Spice
23. Indict, e.g.
24. Long walk
25. Wife of Jacob
26. NBA members
27. Breathing device
28. Food overhang
29. Time unit
30. Father
31. Park, CA
32. Western
33. 12 Abounds
34. Sound of the border lane
35. Irma
36. of Eden
37. Siberian river
38. Willow tree
39. Meat
40. Son of Isaac
41. Utters

DOWN

1. A Strauss
2. TV actor Ken
3. Abacus
4. "time in which to do so" (FOR)
5. Up-to-date
6. Thawed
7. Half
8. Like some nations
9. Figure of speech
10. National
11. 11 Western
12. 12 Abounds
13. Sound of the border lane
14. 14 Sound of the border lane
15. 15 Do well
16. 16 Papal vestment
17. 17 Blue colors
18. 18 Toss
19. 19 Essay
20. 20 Mine prop
21. 21 Volcanic output
22. 22 Iron or Spice
23. 23 Indict, e.g.
24. 24 Long walk
25. 25 Wife of Jacob
26. 26 NBA members
27. 27 Breathing device
28. 28 Food overhang
29. 29 Time unit
30. 30 Father
31. 31 Park, CA
32. 32 Western
33. 33 12 Abounds
34. 34 Sound of the border lane
35. 35 Irma
36. 36 of Eden
37. 37 Siberian river
38. 38 Willow tree
39. 39 Meat
40. 40 Son of Isaac
41. 41 Utters

Puzzle solved:

ACROSS: 1. A (puzzle), 2. Painful life, 3. Free, 4. Stewing pot, 5. Dies, 6. Summer house, 7. Portal, 8. Deck officer, 9. Eventually, 10. Child's game, 11. Particular, 12. Bugle call, 13. Name used to complete columns, 14. City, Utah, 15. Do well, 16. Papal vestment, 17. Blue colors, 18. Toss, 19. Essay, 20. Mine prop, 21. Volcanic output, 22. Iron or Spice, 23. Indict, e.g., 24. Long walk, 25. Wife of Jacob, 26. NBA members, 27. Breathing device, 28. Food overhang, 29. Time unit, 30. Father, 31. Park, CA, 32. Western, 33. 12 Abounds, 34. Sound of the border lane, 35. Irma, 36. of Eden, 37. Siberian river, 38. Willow tree, 39. Meat, 40. Son of Isaac, 41. Utters.

DOWN: 1. A Strauss, 2. TV actor Ken, 3. Abacus, 4. "time in which to do so" (FOR), 5. Up-to-date, 6. Thawed, 7. Half, 8. Like some nations, 9. Figure of speech, 10. National, 11. 11 Western, 12. 12 Abounds, 13. Sound of the border lane, 14. 14 Sound of the border lane, 15. 15 Do well, 16. 16 Papal vestment, 17. 17 Blue colors, 18. 18 Toss, 19. 19 Essay, 20. 20 Mine prop, 21. 21 Volcanic output, 22. 22 Iron or Spice, 23. 23 Indict, e.g., 24. 24 Long walk, 25. 25 Wife of Jacob, 26. 26 NBA members, 27. 27 Breathing device, 28. 28 Food overhang, 29. 29 Time unit, 30. 30 Father, 31. 31 Park, CA, 32. 32 Western, 33. 33 12 Abounds, 34. 34 Sound of the border lane, 35. 35 Irma, 36. 36 of Eden, 37. 37 Siberian river, 38. 38 Willow tree, 39. 39 Meat, 40. 40 Son of Isaac, 41. 41 Utters.

Answers tomorrow: Yesterday's Jumbles: FUDGY AMITY THWART DOMINO. Answer: An ambitious cowboy's life is filled with this — GIDDAP AND WHOA.



Gabriela Sabatini returns a shot during her Virginia Slims final against Lindsay Davenport (AFP photo)

Sabatini captures Slims title ending 30-month dry spell

NEW YORK (AP) — After wandering the tennis wastelands for more than 2½ years, Gabriela Sabatini has once again discovered the winning touch. It may have come just in time to save women's tennis.

"It's not just winning the title," Sabatini said after taking the season-ending Virginia Slims Championships Sunday. "It means more the way I won the title, the way I played. I was confident the whole week."

Her return to form was the good news for women's tennis, which has experienced plenty of the other kind.

This was the week that Martina Navratilova retired. Monica Seles is still nowhere to be seen on a tennis court.

Jennifer Capriati has just begun a comeback after being known in the past year for her escapades with police. Steffi Graf, while still No. 1, is reportedly ready to undergo surgery on her bad back.

Just when it looked darkest, Sabatini again became a bright light.

Six years ago, Sabatini won this unique 16-player tournament, when she followed two years later by winning the U.S. Open, she was considered to be on the verge of stardom.

Instead, she soon became a "whatever happened to..." and fell from third to ninth in the world.

Her last title came in May 1992, when she won the Italian Open. A year later, she sustained her most shocking loss, bowing in the 1993 French Open quarterfinals to Mary Joe Fernandez after jumping out to what appeared to be an insurmountable 6-1, 5-1 lead.

"That was the toughest one," Sabatini admits. "I was

winning that match so easy and playing great that year. I really thought I had a chance to win the tournament."

"After I lost that match, I was so frustrated, so disappointed, that it didn't go my way that it took me actually a few weeks to forget about it. ...It was really tough, you know, to forget about that and to start playing again, start being focused again."

She solved all those problems Sunday when she beat 18-year-old Lindsay Davenport 6-3, 6-2, 6-4 in the only best-of-5-sets final the women play. On this day at Madison Square Garden, it was Davenport who was unable to cope with a plethora of unsolvable problems presented by Sabatini.

"I think when I didn't start off that well, I got a little frustrated, but she was part of the reason," Davenport said. "She was chipping balls low and top-spinning them high, and hitting them short, hitting them deep, and I couldn't get a rhythm, so she was definitely one of the major reasons."

It was at times an odd match, one in which Sabatini always seemed to be in control, but one in which neither player was able to consistently hold serve.

Davenport began the match by holding at love. The next time she held her service, she was down a set and a trailing 4-1 in the second. "I knew what I had to do," Sabatini said. "She hits the ball hard and very deep, so I knew I had to play deep and my shots had to be very aggressive and move her around. I also had to try to mix the game, not to let her play the same."

It worked to perfection. One of the biggest hitters in

the women's game when her feet are set, Davenport was kept on the move by Sabatini, who kept changing spins, pace and direction.

Davenport began the third set by breaking Sabatini at 15, aided by three double-faults, the Argentine's ninth, 10th and 11th of the match. And when she broke Sabatini again in the seventh game, Davenport put the set back on serve.

But she had to serve again with Sabatini leading 5-4. This time, like so many times during the match, she failed to hold serve.

The final point came on a perfectly crafted backhand passing shot set up when Davenport's forehand hit the net and bounced high, that left her vulnerable and standing near the net.

Sabatini came into this tournament unseeded, after defeating Navratilova, Julie Halard of France, No. 8 Kimiko Date of Japan and Davenport. Sabatini moved up one spot in the world rankings, to eighth.

Davenport said she wasn't the same player who had advanced to the title match by defeating Germany's Anke Huber, fourth-seeded Jana Novotna of Czech Republic and No. 5 Mary Pierce of France. Despite the loss, her ranking rose from seventh to six, switching places with Navratilova.

"This was by far my biggest and my best result," Davenport said. "I made a lot of errors and I was pretty nervous."

"If I could get in this position a little more, I'll feel a little more calm and relaxed out there."

"But this week has taught me that I really like tennis. This is what it's for."

Sampras boosts ranking with ATP win

FRANKFURT (AP) — Two Grand Slams, eight other titles, record earnings, top ranking safe. Not a bad year. But Pete Sampras thinks it could have been better.

Sampras won the Australian Open in January, Wimbledon in the summer, and the IBM/ATP Tour world championship for the second time Sunday.

"This ends the year on a great, great note," Sampras said after beating Boris Becker 4-6, 6-3, 7-5, 6-4.

"It gives me a bit of satisfaction. It's a good win here because the fall hasn't been so great," said Sampras, who also won here in 1991.

The American collected \$1.225 million for his victory and brought his 1994 earnings to \$3,607,812, an annual record for the tour.

Sampras began the year so strongly that he looked almost invincible. But injuries slowed him after his second Wimbledon title and he was beaten in the round of 16 at the U.S. Open.

Defeated by Andre Agassi and Becker last month on European Indoor Courts took some shine off his crown.

Although he lost to Becker at the start of the round-robin portion of the world championship, Sampras bounced back Sunday with an impressive performance. And he also beat Agassi in the semifinals.

Sampras, 23, is the first player to stay atop the entire year since Ivan Lendl in 1987.

"It's a great accomplishment. It just proves that I have been really consistent even though I pulled out of six events. Being injured right after Wimbledon was very frustrating and the Open experience was very discouraging. I still maintained that No. 1 ranking by a pretty good margin and I hope to continue that."

"I got Andre right behind me, dying to be No. 1 so I just need to keep working hard."

Although beaten by



World No. 1 Pete Sampras jumps in joy after winning the ATP Tour tournament in Frankfurt (AFP photo)

Becker in five of their previous six indoor matches, Sampras rose to the occasion Sunday, even as 9,000 fans in the festhalle cheered for his rival.

He ended the year with a 74-11 record, and is now 6-5 against Becker in his career. Becker, who was also seeking his second title after winning in 1992, collected \$640,000 for his runner-up finish.

The German, who will be 27 Tuesday, thundered 30 aces past Sampras, who only had 9. But Becker also had 12 double-faults, while Sampras had three in the two-hour, 39-minute match.

"I returned a lot better than when I played him Wednesday. I put a lot of pressure on his serve, and as a result he hit a number of double-faults. It played a huge part in the match," Sampras said.

Sampras lost his serve only once, and that cost him the first set.

Leading ATP rankings

Leading men's rankings issued by the ATP Tour Monday:

1. Pete Sampras (U.S.) 5,097
2. Andre Agassi (U.S.) 3,249
3. Boris Becker (Germany) 3,237
4. Sergi Bruguera (Spain) 3,007
5. Goran Ivanisevic (Croatia) 2,936
6. Michael Chang (U.S.) 2,647
7. Stefan Edberg (Sweden) 2,471
8. Alberto Berasategui (Spain) 2,470
9. Michael Stich (Germany) 2,380
10. Todd Martin (U.S.) 2,307
11. Yevgeny Kafelnikov (Russia) 2,174
12. Wayne Ferreira (S. Africa) 2,121
13. Jim Courier (U.S.) 1,909
14. Marc Rosset (Switzerland) 1,707
15. Andrei Medvedev (Ukraine) 1,655

Trail Blazers end losing streak

PORTLAND, Oregon (AP) — With James Robinson filling in at point guard and Rod Strickland, Terry Porter, Negele Knight and Clyde Drexler out with injuries, the Portland Trail Blazers had just enough to end a three-game losing streak.

Robinson had 24 points, eight assists and only six turnovers as the Trail Blazers rallied to beat the Detroit Pistons 98-96 Sunday night.

"It wasn't difficult playing 48 minutes ... I just rested during timeouts and free throws," Robinson said. "We really can play well without Clyde and Rod. We've just got to keep playing hard."

Robinson, who averaged 11.6 minutes last season after leaving Alabama following his junior year, also held Pistons point guard Lindsey Hunter scoreless. Robinson and Hunter were high school teammates in Jackson, Miss.

"We didn't have much to go on the bench," Blazers coach P.J. Carlesimo said. "I thought James did exceptionally well."

In other games, New Jersey edged the Los Angeles Clippers 98-97 and Sacramento beat Cleveland 96-88.

Clifford Robinson scored 26 points, Buck Williams had 15 points and 12 rebounds and Tracy Murray added 14 points for Portland. Joe Dumars led Detroit with 35 points, 22 in the first half.

"We were down a lot of points in the second half but played hard," Carlesimo said. "The key to the game for us was our offensive rebounding and taking care of the ball."

Chris Dudley had 15 rebounds — seven in the fourth quarter — as Portland outrebounded Detroit 46-24.

"You can't let a team crash the offensive boards like Portland did and expect to win," Detroit coach Don Chaney said.

"You can't allow a team that many easy second shots. I told our guys about their rebounding ability before the game, and I said it again at halftime and wrote it on the blackboard, but we just didn't get it done."

Strickland, who broke his right wrist Tuesday night against Phoenix, joined Porter and Knight on the injured list before the game. Porter is recovering from surgery on his right ankle and night has tendinitis in his left ankle. Drexler is out with a sprained ankle.

Clifford Robinson made



Orlando Magic guard Nick Anderson (right) slams a basket over New Jersey centre Benoît Benjamin in their NBA match. The Magic defeated the Nets 113-103 (AFP photo)

two free throws with 15 seconds left to give Portland a 96-94 lead, and added another with 8.7 seconds remaining to increase the lead to 3.

Grant Hill, who had 17 points, made two free throws with 6.2 seconds left to draw Detroit to 97-96, but Murray followed with a free throw with 5.2 seconds left and the Pistons failed to get a shot off in the final seconds.

"In those final seconds we got a couple of huge rebounds," Carlesimo said. "It was ugly sometimes but we found a way to win."

The Pistons, who led 82-73 after three quarters, had an 84-79 advantage with 9 minutes to go, but the Blazers tied it at 94 with 46 seconds remaining on Williams' put-back.

James Robinson then drew an offensive foul on Dumars. Williams missed a 12-foot baseline shot with 18 seconds left. But Clifford Robinson was fouled on the rebound.

"Winning tonight is a confidence builder going into our road trip to Texas," said Murray.

At East Rutherford, New Jersey, Los Angeles almost got its first victory of the season, but Armon Gilliam dunked over two defenders with 7.7 seconds to play to

give New Jersey the winning points.

The Clippers' last chance ended when Pooh Richardson's desperation drive just before the buzzer was swatted away by P.J. Brown.

Los Angeles outplayed the nets most of the game, and the Clippers' led by as much as 15 in the third quarter.

"It was no moral victory," Terry Dehere said. "A loss is a loss and this one was tough."

Derrick Coleman had 20 points and 14 rebounds and Kenny Anderson had 20 points and 10 assists for New Jersey. Richardson led Los Angeles with 19 points.

At Sacramento, rookie Brian Grant had 18 points and 10 rebounds off the bench and scored 6 of Sacramento's last 7 points. Fellow Rookie Michael Smith scored 6 of his 13 points in the fourth quarter.

"Michael makes as few mistakes as any rookie I've seen in 15 years," Kings coach Gary St. Jean said.

Duane Causwell added 14 points, and Guard Randy Brown sparked the team with five assists in place of Spud Webb, who sat out with a sprained ankle.

Tyrone Hill had 17 points and 20 rebounds for Cleveland.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Prince Abdullah heads JSF

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah will again head the newly-formed Jordan Soccer Federation (JSF). The reshuffled JSF now includes Dr. Mamdouh Abbadi, the mayor of Amman, as vice chairman, Ghaleb Abu Jaber, Sultan Shreideh, Haitham Majali, Fahd Bayari, Dr. Bassam Haroun and Ahmad Al Udwan.

Jordan's body-building team leaves for World Championship

AMMAN (Petra) — Mustafa Hasanien and Iyad Mahmoud, left Amman for Shanghai, China, Sunday to represent Jordan in the World Body-Building Championships. Twenty-seven countries are taking part in the five-day competition.

Tennis stars agree to donate prize money

FRANKFURT (AFP) — The worlds top tennis players have agreed to donate hundreds of thousands of dollars in prize money to help create a special "Kids Fund." Altogether one and a half million dollars will be raised from tour and world prize money donated by players. In addition big name players will appear ten times a year at special clinics, autograph and photo sessions and other promotional events in a bid to attract more young people to the game.

ATP wants to slow the game

FRANKFURT (AFP) — In an attempt to enhance interest in the game, tennis officials are planning to slow the indoor game with the help of advanced technology and to regulate television exposure. Responding to common complaints that the indoor game is too fast, with few rallies between players serving aces at 200km/h, the Association of Tennis Professionals tour is developing technology to overcome the problem. The tour is working with the French Tennis Federation and the International Tennis Federation to develop a machine that will measure the speed of specific balls on a specific surface. Mark Miles, chief executive officer of the IBM/ATP Tour, told reporters Sunday. Similar tests with balls will be conducted in Wimbledon "to determine an appropriate balance for play on grass."

Ma bids to woo back world champ Liu

BEIJING (AFP) — Chinese athletics coach Ma Junren mae a direct attempt to woo back world champion Liu Dong into his "army" of world-class athletes this month, according to the China Youth Daily. Disciplinarian Ma reportedly went to Liu's home and admitted he may have been "too extreme" with her in the past and "made some mistakes." Liu, 21 next month, won the world 1,500m title at Stuttgart last year but then fell out with her mentor after telling him she wanted a boyfriend and to grow her hair. Ma, who also trains 10,000m champion Wang Junxia and 3,000m title holder Qu Yunxia and is equally famous for feeding them on a diet of turtle's blood and a secret elixir, promptly threw her out of his Liaoning-based team, arguing she had a "rebellious nature."

Prince Al-Waleed distributes cars to players

RIYADH (AFP) — A Saudi prince awarded each of the kingdom's 37 top soccer stars a Chevrolet Limousine after they won the Gulf Cup championship last week, sports officials disclosed Sunday. Insisting on anonymity, they said the gifts presented by Prince Al-Waleed Bin Talal Al Saud were worth \$750,000. Prince Al-Waleed, a nephew of King Fahd, made headlines by buying stock in the Euro Disney theme park in France earlier this year. He is a major shareholder of U.S. Citicorp, and has shares in Saks Fifth Avenue, the Fairmont Hotel chain in the United States and Canada's Four Seasons Hotel Inc.

Batistuta equals Italian scoring record

NAPLES (R) — Gabriel Batistuta equalled a 32-year-old Italian record when he scored for Fiorentina against Napoli Sunday. The goal meant the Argentine World Cup player had scored in the first 10 league games of the season, matching the run enjoyed by Ezio Pascutti for Bologna at the start of the 1962-63 campaign.

Nine Kuwaitis banned for 3 months after shopping trip

KUWAIT (R) — Nine Kuwaiti soccer internationals have been suspended for three months after they went shopping without permission in the United Arab Emirates. The Kuwait news agency KUNA quoted the country's football association secretary Mohammad Othman Sunday as saying the players were punished for "ignoring instructions by officials." The nine first-team players had been dropped from last Wednesday's prestigious Gulf Cup final won 2-0 by Saudi Arabia following their shopping trip to Dubai, about 100 kms from Abu Dhabi where the match was played.

Indian celebration

The Indian community in Jordan celebrates Guru Nanak Jayanti on Friday, Nov. 25, at the premises of the Embassy of India. All Indian nationals and spouses are welcome to the 12 noon to 2 p.m. event, which will include a "langur."

Wheelchair athletes end marathon

ALMA-ATA (R) — A team of physically handicapped men ended a 9,000 kilometres wheelchair "super-marathon" across the former Soviet Union Sunday and urged governments worldwide to recognise the rights and needs of the disabled.

Fifteen paraplegic athletes, representing each of the ex-Soviet republics, began their journey on June 20 in St Petersburg, passed through the capitals of the newly independent states and made it to Alma-Ata five months later.

Hand-peddalling their U.S.-made tricycles in bright sunshine at a fairly steady 20 kilometres per hour on the last leg into town, the team was applauded by bystanders before pulling into a car park.

They were greeted by a brass band, folk singers and civic leaders bearing traditional gifts of bread and salt. The officials made brief speeches praising the team's manhood and heroism.

The organiser of the event, Dmitry Shparo, a Russian explorer who in 1979

became the first man to ski to the North Pole, said the team had passed through trouble spots such as Abkhazia and Dushanbe, capital of troubled Tajikistan.

But it had always been helped on its way. "This shows that friendship is our tomorrow," Shparo said.

Zakir Minyashirov, the team member from Turkmenistan, told Reuters the journey should set an example to handicapped people to take up sport and "show politicians how to find a common language."

Shparo said the satisfaction of completing the journey equalled the thrill of his polar trek and helped to demonstrate that governments should treat the handicapped as real people with real rights. "In Russia and the former Soviet republics the disabled don't count as people," he said in an interview.

Four members of the team plan to go around the world on their next expedition and are deliberately planning a tough route through China, India, North Africa and South America.

Dallas win, lose two quarterbacks

DALLAS (R) — Emmitt Smith rushed for two first-quarter touchdowns and Kevin Williams returned a punt 83 yards for a score as the Dallas Cowboys survived injuries to Troy Aikman and Rodney Peete and routed the Washington Redskins, 31-7 Sunday.

Aikman directed the Cowboys (9-2) to 17 points in the first quarter before leaving in the second quarter with a sprained ligament in his left knee. Peete suffered a sprained thumb late in the third quarter and was replaced by Jason Garrett, who finished up.

In Chicago, Lewis Tillman ran for 126 yards a touchdown as the surprising Chicago Bears won their third straight game with a 20-10 victory over the Detroit Lions.

In Cincinnati, Don Majkowski's eight-yard touchdown pass to Sean Dawkins with 1:54 left lifted the Indi-

anapolis Colts to a 17-13 victory over the Cincinnati Bengals.

In Buffalo, Jim Kelly completed 32-of-44 passes for 365 yards and a pair of touchdowns to Andre Reed, who had a team-record 15 receptions, as the Buffalo Bills defeated the Green Bay Packers, 29-20.

Reed, who last week argued with Kelly on the sidelines during a loss to Pittsburgh, amassed 191 receiving yards. He hauled in scoring tosses of 15 and 10 yards as the Bills built a 27-6 half-time lead.

"He had one of the great games I have ever seen a receiver have," Green Bay head coach Paul Holmgren said.

In Denver, John Elway scored on a four-yard run with under two minutes left to rally the Denver Broncos to a 32-28 victory over the Atlanta Falcons.

In Kansas City, Kimble

Anders scored on a one-yard run midway through the fourth quarter as the Kansas City Chiefs beat the Cleveland Browns, 20-13.

Anders' touchdown broke a 13-13 tie and capped a seven-play, 61-yard drive.

At New England, Drew Bledsoe connected with Leroy Thompson on a 27-yard scoring pass in the first quarter and Matt Bahr kicked three field goals as the New England Patriots defeated the San Diego Chargers, 23-17.

At the Raiders, Jeff Hostetler threw for 308 yards and three touchdowns, including a pair to Tim Brown, as the Los Angeles Raiders held on for a 24-19 victory over the New Orleans Saints.

In Pittsburgh, Gary Anderson's 39-yard field goal with just under five minutes remaining in overtime gave the Pittsburgh Steelers a 16-13 victory over the Miami Dolphins.

Algerian opposition meets in Rome, calls for peace

ROME (Agencies) — Leading members of Algeria's opposition and civil rights groups on Monday called for peace talks to end fighting which they say risks plunging the country into a full-blown civil war.

Former Algerian President Ahmed Ben Bella criticised violence employed by the military-backed government in the conflict on the opening day of a two-day gathering in Rome to discuss the crisis.

The Algerian government is not taking part and has attacked the Rome discussions, saying it never sought outside mediation and would not tolerate interference in its internal affairs.

"We are seeing the first signs of what could become a full-blown civil war. There is too much blood — there must be a dialogue," Mr. Ben Bella told representatives from 12 opposition groups taking part in the talks.

At least 10,000 people have been killed in Algeria since the army cancelled elections in 1992 in which the

fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) had taken a commanding lead. Western experts put the death toll in the conflict at up to 20,000.

"Many of the civilian victims are not Islamists but people who made the mistake of living in the wrong neighbourhood," said Mr. Ben Bella, 75.

"I call on politicians to calm their spirits and to put a stop to the violence, from wherever it comes," said Mr. Ben Bella, who heads the moderate Movement for Democracy.

Abdennour Ali Yahya, a former minister who now leads the country's League for Human Rights, said the rate of killings by the authorities and opposition guerrillas had increased drastically recently.

"Hundreds of people are dying every day," he said. "Every morning, dozens of Algerians are found dead by the side of the road. The whole country is affected."

Torture was common for anyone taken into police custody and deaths were now being reported in every village, he added.

Mr. Ben Yahya said violence had skyrocketed since talks between the government and the outlawed FIS collapsed last month, after the government accused the FIS of backing fundamentalist violence that has killed some 70 foreigners.

The senior FIS delegate to the conference, Anwar Haddam, denied that his group encouraged the killing of foreigners.

"We call this terrorism and we condemn these acts," said Mr. Haddam, who is the leader of the FIS's parliamentary delegation to the United States and Europe.

He blamed the military government for creating the tension which engendered the violence and said those who carried out the killings had to take political responsibility for them.

"If we cannot guarantee the safety of Algerians in Algeria how can that of foreigners be guaranteed?" he asked.

Mr. Haddam added that his group had offered to send a delegation to Algeria for talks and was waiting for assurances that their safety would be guaranteed.

"We are open to any proposal," he said, pledging that the front would stick to the principles of political pluralism and would not seek to change the constitution other than by legal means.

The talks are being held at the Roman Catholic Sant'Egidio community, which has a record of successful international peace brokering.

The Vatican has distanced itself from the talks, saying they were an independent initiative on the part of Sant'Egidio.

The Algerian government refused to send a representative, while militantly anti-Islamist groups were also absent. The Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) — the armed wing of the FIS — was not represented.

(Continued on page 7)



An Algerian mother and her children are overcome by emotion in Sidi Abdellah, near Mahelma, as a result of the death of her husband, a policeman who was gunned down by a group of 100 fundamentalists (AFP photo)



SHOW OF STRENGTH: Armed members of the Fateh Hawks swarm a truck during a demonstration in Gaza City on Monday. More than 15,000 people took to the streets in support of Yasser Arafat following heavy clashes with Islamic rioters that left 16 people dead on Friday (see page one) (AFP photo)

COLUMN

Queen Elizabeth wins lottery

LONDON (R) — Queen Elizabeth was among the winners in the first draw of Britain's new National Lottery. Today newspaper reported in its Monday editions. Britain's richest woman won £10 (\$15.70) but she will have to share it with the other members of a 20-strong royal syndicate including her husband, Prince Philip, and the Queen Mother, it said. They will each get 50 pence (80 cents). The royal punters were among 1.1 million Britons who won the minimum prize in the lottery by picking three of the six numbers drawn Saturday evening. The queen sat alone in Windsor Castle watching the draw live on television. Today said. "She loves a flutter," a royal source told the newspaper. "She gets very excited when something she has bet on comes in even second or third."

Diana documentary sells to 21 countries

LONDON (AFP) — A television documentary highlighting the life of Princess Diana and broadcast Saturday evening in Britain has been sold to 21 countries, producers Granada and London Weekend Television said Sunday. The documentary, Diana: Portrait Of A Princess, was based on royal author Andrew Morton's recent bestseller Diana: Her New Life and uses an actress to portray one of his main sources whose identity has not been revealed. Mr. Morton also scored a major hit with his earlier work Diana: Her True Story, based on witness accounts by close friends of her life in the royal household who described her as fraught with misery and prone to bouts of bulimia and severe depression. Among networks to buy the film are U.S. broadcaster CBS and stations in Australia, France, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Russia and South Africa. The film crew followed Princess Diana around for several months after she decided to limit public engagements last December, a move which they noted had apparently not stopped her from keeping going her ambiguous relationship with the press. Newspapers have continually rushed to print exclusive pictures of the princess visiting homeless people in London. Diana is described in the film as a young woman trying to determine which way her new life should go now she has separated from her husband Prince Charles. Her chief concern remains the future of her sons Princes William and Harry. Her astrologer is shown as saying she knew Prince Charles did not love Princess Diana even before they married in 1981.

Chinese police illegally detain anti-smoking elders

BEIJING (R) — Chinese police illegally detained two prominent, elderly anti-smoking activists for 18 days after they took their campaign to a Beijing store and later paid them compensation, officials said Monday. "The police have acknowledged their error and apologized to the two old men," said Zhang Yifang, of the National Smoking and Health Association under the Ministry of Health. "They have admitted that the incarceration was wrongful and have paid compensation to the men," Mr. Zhang told Reuters. Mr. Zhang said his association had invited activists He Cai, 67, of central Hunan province, and Zhuo Xiangbiao, 64, from northern Shaanxi province, to the Chinese capital to help promote its sponsorship of a global anti-smoking forum to be held in Beijing in 1997. He and Zhuo already were revered for walking 10,000 "Li" — about 5,000 kilometers — advanced age last year in a modern "long march" against smoking. While in Beijing last March, the two took their text at one of China's biggest department stores, where they tried to pose with anti-smoking arm bands in front of displays for foreign

Shekel weakens

TEL AVIV (R) — The Israeli shekel weakened against the dollar and basket of foreign currencies for the second consecutive day on Monday as the Central bank intervened to prop up the local currency, dealers said.

The shekel's weakness was a result of rumours of an impending shekel devaluation as banks speculated by buying dollars heavily.

The Bank of Israel intervened to moderate the fall of the shekel.

"The dollar opened trade at 3.026 shekels per dollar and reached a high of 3.070 shekels before the Bank of Israel intervened by supplying huge amounts of dollars to the hungry banks, thus supporting the shekel," said Ilan Zucka of Bank Mizrahi.

"The turnover was enormous."

The shekel closed the daily tender at 3.034 shekels per dollar against 3.026 shekels on Friday and 2.995 shekels on Thursday.

The basket closed at 3.3804 shekels per basket unit against 3.3737 on Friday and 3.3456 on Thursday.

The shekel traded against the yen at 3.0761 shekels per 100 yen, unchanged from Friday, and against the mark at 1.9439 shekels per mark from 1.9432 on Friday.

In late afternoon the dollar traded at 3.0369 shekels.

Menem in Syria, may try peace mediation

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — President Carlos Menem of Argentina arrived Monday for talks with Syrian officials amid reports he would offer to mediate between Syria and Israel.

Mr. Menem, who is of Syrian origin, was greeted at the airport by President Hafez Al Assad. After a 21-gun salvo and inspection of the guard of honour, Mr. Assad and his guest drove to Tishrin palace.

It was the first visit to Syria by an Argentine president.

The official Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) quoted Mr. Menem as saying before he left Buenos Aires for Damascus that he was very proud to visit Syria, "the homeland of my father and grandfather."

He said he looked forward to meeting "my relatives and friends" and that "my meeting with President Hafez Assad will make the visit the happiest of my trips and tours."

An official announcement released in Damascus on Sunday said Mr. Menem would hold talks with his Syrian counterpart. The announcement did not say what subjects the two leaders will discuss.

However, reports from Buenos Aires said Mr. Menem had expressed a willingness to play the role of

mediator between Syria and Israel.

He was quoted as saying at a reception at the Syrian Club in Buenos Aires that he would discuss with Mr. Assad "the need to establish peace in the Middle East" and that he was prepared to "take part in the peace process" between Israel and its Arab neighbours.

In Israel, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres welcomed a possible Menem mediation bid, saying, "I'm sure that President Menem is capable of carrying important messages from Israel to Syria and from Syria to Israel."

He mentioned Mr. Menem's Syrian origins and added that "the fact that a president from this origin is supporting so much and so seriously the peace process in the Middle East and coexistence of different religions and ethnic groups in Argentina itself speak very much to his credit."

Government ministers and around 100 businessmen accompanied Mr. Menem for the three-day trip.

The two presidents had a first session of talks at the guest palace of Tishrin, where Mr. Menem was staying. Mr. Assad spokesman Gibrán Kurieh told AFP.

Syrian vice presidents



Carlos Menem

Abdul Halim Khaddam, Prime Minister Mahmoud Al Zoubi, Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa and Justice Minister Hassan Hassan attended the meeting, Mr. Kurieh added.

A seminar has been set for Tuesday for Syrian and Argentine businessmen, who are expected to reactivate bilateral trade, scientific and cultural agreements signed in 1989.

On Wednesday, Mr. Menem was to visit his old family house in the village of Yabrud, 80 kilometres north of Damascus.

"I am proud to visit my ancestors' homeland. I am proud to meet President Assad, and I am sure that our talks will be fruitful and successful," Mr. Menem told the Syrian news agency before leaving Buenos Aires.

Experts review water and optimisation in agriculture

By P.V. Vivekanand

Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Arabs and Israelis might be able to resolve Middle Eastern political problems through the three-year-old peace negotiations, but the chronic shortage of water in the mostly arid region could be addressed only through wise management since there is not enough to go around, European and Arab experts said Monday.

Agriculture is an area where users particularly tend to waste water through inappropriate use due to either carelessness or lack of expert advice in most countries in the region, the experts told the first working session of a three-day seminar on "Optimisation of Water in Agriculture."

Representatives of more than a dozen Arab and European countries and international and regional organisations are participating in the seminar, organised by the French embassy in Amman in cooperation with the University of Jordan and the Jordan Valley Authority and partly financed by the Delegation of the Commission of the European Union in Amman.

The focus on the meeting is a close assessment of the water situation in the Middle East and how the region's farmers could make optimum use of the available water, which international studies have found to be far short of the actual needs of the region regardless of political agreements.

The seminar, formally opened by Minister of Water and Irrigation Saleh Issa, is on behalf of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan (see page 3), was described as a forum for "providing practical results available to farmers throughout the Middle East" rather than a "formal meeting between exchanging theoretical points of view in a closed circuit" by French Ambassador Bernard Bajelet.

Yves Gazzo, head of the European Commission delegation in Amman, spoke briefly about the problems faced by the region's countries in view of the high rate of population growth, climate

conditions, limited water resources and the rising demand for water in the agricultural sector.

Noting that experts have set a 500 cubic metres per capita consumption as the acceptable base for any country, Mr. Gazzo said water use in Jordan (where per capita consumption was 245 cubic metres in 1993) and other countries in the region were already below the base line.

As such, he said, there is an urgent need to coordinate efforts in water to manage existing as well as future water resources in an optimal way.

Among the topics under review at the seminar are irrigation methods and techniques presently used in the region as well as proposed means to raise efficient use of agriculture water, land and water policies, water resources development in Syria, irrigation management, vegetable production and irrigation in Turkey, Sudan's experience in horticultural crops, means to improve water resources, use of treated water for irrigation, and water conservation methods.

Avedis Serpekian, an official of the Jordan Valley Authority, presented a detailed situation report on irrigation in Jordan, giving the areas of irrigation, number of dams and reservoirs and the Kingdom's plans to maintain and develop its water sector through projects which have national and regional dimensions.

Shawkat Sarsour of the Palestine Agricultural Relief Committee, a non-governmental organisation based in Jerusalem, presented an assessment of Palestinian agriculture and the constraints imposed on Palestinian farming by the Israeli occupation authorities (see page 2).

Mahmoud Awad of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) reviewed the land and water policies in the region. In a question and answer session, he emphasised the need to introduce control measures as a means to ensure optimum use of water and prevent waste through imposing realistic tariffs.

"When you know that you are paying for it, you will get up and close a (leaking) tap," Mr. Awad said.

Presented during Monday's session were also working papers that detailed optimisation of water in Palestine agriculture by a Palestinian expert, constraints on high efficiency in irrigation management by Ross Hagan of the United States, information system for irrigation management in the Jordan Valley by Dr. Mohammad Shatanawi of the Water and Environmental Research Centre, effective water use in Jordan by Abdel Nabi Fardous of the Jordan Environmental Society, supplemental irrigation by Thei Oweis of the International Centre for Agriculture Research in the Dry Areas, and economising water in irrigation by Patrice Guinet of Agro-Resources of France.

Professor Peter Wolff of the University of Kassel, Germany, described "wise water management" as one of the "most crucial challenges facing the Near East."

Noting that the normal flows of most Near Eastern rivers and most of the rechargeable groundwater resources are fully allocated and new water resources were scarce, Prof. Wolff called for innovative approaches to water management.

The professor also briefly reviewed water management in Germany, which, he said, is also facing a water shortage.

Prof. Wolff said Jordan's irrigation sector "will have to get along with less and less water and will be forced to use water of marginal quality" and called on the sector to adjust to the situation "as fast as possible."

"This can only be achieved through intensive research work, especially on-farm research, adjustments to the legal framework, institutional developments, establishment of supporting and extension services etc.," he told the gathering. "There is no general model applicable to Jordan. Jordan, as all countries, will have to find its own way of dealing with the problem."

"But is always very helpful to look at problems other countries are facing and how they are being solved."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Syria says 'mild' quake hit country

DAMASCUS (R) — An earthquake hit northeast Syria on Sunday but caused no casualties or damage, officials said. They said the quake, which they termed as "mild," measured 1.5 on the Richter scale and lasted less than 10 seconds at around 1430 GMT. It was felt by residents in the cities of Dayr Azzawr, Rakka and Hasakka, northeast of Damascus. Turkish monitors said a strong earthquake measuring 5.0 on the Richter scale hit northeast Syria on Sunday and was felt in four provinces of Turkey. A quake of that strength is powerful enough to cause heavy damage in a populated area. Syrian officials said that oil operations in the Dayr Azzawr area, where most of Syria's oilfields are located, were running normally.

Rabin to visit Seoul, Tokyo

SEOUL (AP) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin will visit Seoul Dec. 14-17, becoming the first Israeli head of government to visit South Korea, an official announcement said Monday. Before coming to Seoul, Mr. Rabin is to visit Japan Dec. 12-14 for talks with Prime Minister Tomichi Murayama, Japan's Foreign Ministry said. It also will be the first visit to Japan by an Israeli prime minister. Mr. Rabin will confer with South Korean President Kim Young-Sam on the situation in Northeast Asia and the Middle East, chief presidential spokesman Choe Don-Shik said. During Mr. Rabin's stay, the two countries will sign an aviation agreement to open direct flights between their capitals, transportation ministry officials said. Israel and South Korea established formal diplomatic ties in 1962 but their relations have been bumpy because of Seoul's relations with Arab countries. The two countries withdrew their diplomats in the 1970s. Israel reopened its embassy in Seoul early this year but South Korea has yet to reciprocate.

Pollard remains threat to security — CIA says

WASHINGTON (AP) — Convicted Israeli spy Jonathan Pollard, who is eligible for parole next year, has tried to reveal classified information from prison and remains a security risk, according to Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) documents. "He retains the ability to harm our national security because of his intelligence, his power of recollection, his history of significant emotional instability, his history of drug abuse and his overriding loyalty to another country," the agency wrote in documents cited in Monday's edition of Defence Week, a weekly newsletter that covers the defence industry. The declassified documents were provided to the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, which asked the CIA and the Defence Intelligence Agency to assess the potential national security damage if Mr. Pollard were released, the newsletter said. Mr. Pollard's attorney, Theodore Olson, responded that the CIA's accusations of drug abuse and continued attempts to reveal classified information are unfounded. Mr. Pollard, a former navy intelligence analyst, was sentenced to life in prison in 1987 after pleading guilty to

selling secrets to Israel. He admitted selling classified information to Israel from 1984 until his arrest in November 1985, receiving as much as \$2,500 a month. President Clinton refused to reduce Mr. Pollard's sentence last year.

Former G.E. manager sentenced for fraud

CINCINNATI (AFP) — A former General Electric (GE) manager who plotted to divert millions of dollars in U.S. defence contracts to Israel has been sentenced to seven years in prison. Herbert B. Steindler, who was GE's international sales manager, apologised for his actions at Friday's sentencing but U.S. District Judge Carl Rubin was unmoved. Mr. Steindler, 55, of Melbourne, Florida, pleaded guilty in July in conspiracy, wire fraud, money laundering and use of the mail in racketeering, and agreed to repay \$1.7 million to the U.S. government. He was convicted in connection with a scheme to divert \$11 million from G.E. contracts with the U.S. government to supply jet engines to Israel. The scheme ran between 1984 and 1990. A former Israeli army general was convicted in Israel for his involvement in the scheme in 1991 while G.E. paid \$69 million in fines, penalties and damages.

Death sentences sought in tourist slayings

CAIRO (AP) — Egypt's military prosecutor on Monday called for the death penalty for four suspected extremists accused of killing a German tourist and two Egyptians. Two of the men are at large. The attack occurred Sept. 28 in the Red Sea resort of Hurghada. Another German and an Egyptian were wounded in the shooting on the crowded street. The prosecutor also called for harsh prison sentences for 12 other suspected militants implicated in planning the attack. Four of them are at large. Foreign reporters and Egyptian reporters with foreign news organisations have been banned from the trial on grounds the coverage distorts Egypt's image abroad. The case against the 16 defendants opened Nov. 5 and is expected to conclude by the end of this month, according to a military official who spoke on condition of anonymity. The defence is to begin Tuesday.

Palestinian minister visits France

PARIS (AFP) — The culture minister of the Palestinian authority was due to arrive in France on Monday for a week-long visit concentrating on problems of education in the newly-autonomous territories, officials said. Yasser Abed Rabbo, minister for culture and arts, will also discuss Franco-Palestinian cultural cooperation with French officials during the visit, the foreign ministry announced. During the trip, which comes amid heightened tension in the Gaza Strip following clashes last week which left 18 dead, he will meet Culture Minister Jacques Toubon as well as senior officials at the foreign ministry. Foreign ministry spokesman Richard Duque said the latest clashes would not influence France's continuing support for the Palestinian authority.